

THE FIVE CENT

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Vol. II.

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Young Jack Harkaway and the Counterfeiters.



"Stand out of the way and let us pass," exclaimed Jack, impetuously. "Don't come any nearer," said Lenoir, with quiet determination, "for I warn you that it would be dangerous. You can't move from this place until you have made terms with me."

Young Harkaway and the Counterfeiters.

CHAPTER I.

MARKBY'S MISSIVE—ON THE WATCH—THE SPY'S MISSION.

THE Englishman, Markby, was gone before Lenoir could question him further.

"Jack Harkaway!" exclaimed Lenoir; "I have heard that name before. Of course; I remember now. But Markby speaks of him as a lad. Why, the Harkaway that I remember must be a middle-aged man by now; beside, what little I knew of Harkaway then would not show him to be a likely man for my purpose."

Not long after this, as Lenoir was upon the point of rising and leaving the cafe, a commissioner or public messenger came up at a run with a note for him.

He took the note and found it to contain the following words, scribbled by Markby:

"They are now coming along in your direction. You will easily recognize them—two youths in sailor dress. Follow them, and if they stay at any of the cafes, I leave you to scrape up an acquaintance with them. M."

"Markby has been upon the *qui vive*," said Lenoir to himself.

Glancing to the left, he saw the two young sailors approaching.

He stepped into the house, intending to let them pass and then follow them, and if by chance they should, on their way, stop at either of the cafes, he could drop in and seek the opportunity he desired.

But while he was waiting the young sailors came up, and instead of passing the cafe they dropped into chairs at the door and called for refreshments.

This was more than Lenoir had bargained for.

Out he came and sat at the next table to the two young Englishmen.

"What is your opinion of Marseilles, Jack?"

"Nothing to see once you're out of sight of the sea, and the natives are not very interesting."

Lenoir stepped forward.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said he. "Englishmen, I presume?"

"Yes, sir," responded Jack; "are you English?"

"I haven't that honor," replied Lenoir.

"You speak good English. You have resided in England, I suppose, for a long while?"

"No, only a short time. Long enough to get a desire to go back there."

"That's very kind of you to say so. Your countrymen, as a rule, don't speak in such flattering terms of *la perfide Albion*."

"And yet you are glad enough to find a refuge there."

"Are you a native of Marseilles?" asked Harry.

"No."

"Then you are not offended at our remarks?"

"Not a bit," replied Lenoir, heartily. "The Marseillais are absurdly conceited about their town, and after all it contains but few objects of interest for a traveler. There are some, however, and if you will accept my escort, I shall be very happy to show you them."

They expressed their thanks at this offer, which they were glad to accept.

"I'm at your service, gentlemen," said Lenoir. "When you please."

"I should say at once then," said Jack.

"Thanks; we will go and tell a friend, who is waiting for us down by the quay, that he must not expect us for an hour or so."

The friend they had to meet was Mr. Mole.

Markby must have been pretty keenly upon the lookout, for no sooner were they gone than back he came.

"Well, what success?"

"Just as I wished," returned Lenoir, with a great chuckle; "they are coming back directly."

"That's your chance; you have only to take them up to your room. Once there, you will do as you please with them."

"There is no danger?"

"If you think that likely after all I have told you take my advice and have nothing whatever to do with them. I don't want to expose you to any risk that you think you ought not to run."

Markby eyed him anxiously for awhile, until Lenoir exclaimed:

"Hang the risk. I'll go for it neck or nothing."

"And you will take them there to-night?"

"I will."

"Good! You'll have no cause to repent your decision. They'll do you a turn that you little contemplate."

And away he went.

"What a strange fellow that Markby is," thought Pierre Lenoir, looking after him.

"What an odd laugh he has."

As soon as Markby was fairly out of sight, he beckoned over to a young man in white blouse and a cap, who had walked along on the opposite side of the way, keeping Markby in view all the while without appearing to notice him.

The fellow in the blouse ran across at once.

"Well, how's it going?"

"Beautiful," returned Markby, "nothing could be better. Already have Harkaway and his hard-knuckled companion, Girdwood, been seen in Lenoir's society. But before the day is over they will be seen in the Caveaux themselves, where proofs of their guilt will spring up hydra-headed from the very ground."

"And what will it end in?" asked the other, eagerly.

"The galleys," returned Markby, with fierce intensity.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed the man in the blouse, with unfeigned admiration. "You always must have been a precious sight downier than I thought. Why, your old man was no fool. He made a brown or two floating his coffins, but he was a guileless pup compared to you."

"You keep watch," said Markby, hurriedly, "and be ready for any emergency. It is a bold stroke we are playing for. Lenoir is a desperate ruffian, and the least mistake in the business would be something which I for one don't care to contemplate."

CHAPTER II.

MARKBY'S NEXT STEP—THE PREFECT OF POLICE—THE PLOT THICKENS—A DOUBLE TRAITOR.

MARKBY went off, muttering to himself.

"Wish that scamp could only share the fate I have reserved for that accursed Harkaway. However, I can't manage that, so I must be thankful for small mercies."

A short walk brought this Markby to the office of the prefect of police, and his business being of considerable importance, he was fortunate in soon obtaining an interview with that great man himself.

"This is an excellent opportunity," said the head of the police, "if your information is thoroughly reliable, although I confess that it almost sounds too good to be true."

"Pardon me, monsieur," said Markby, "the expression you use sounds as though I had got information second-hand. I am a principal. On the 10th, you will please to remember. I have to be of the party."

"It is a very important matter," said the prefect, "that I will not attempt to disguise from you. This Lenoir is evidently at the head of a gigantic conspiracy. We have been long seeking to discover how he disposed of his counter—"

"Stock," said Markby, interrupting the prefect, with a smile.

"You really think that these English people are their confidants?"

"The chief confederates; yes. They are the heads of the English part of our scheme."

"How many men should you require?"

"A dozen fully armed, in plain clothes. These can descend into the *caveaux* to make the capture."

"So many?"

"You don't know Lenoir," said Markby; "he's the very devil when he's aroused. A dozen will have all their work to do. As for the two Englishmen—"

"They are young," exclaimed the prefect.

"They are young fiends. I have seen them fight like devils. They are just as dangerous as Lenoir. They are as cunning as the evil one himself, and will gammon even you, by their plausible tales."

"Let me see," said the prefect, thoughtfully. "I will take note of the names which you tell me they are likely to assume."

"One has been calling himself Jack Harkaway."

"And the other?"

"Harry Girdwood."

"Good—and you can prove that both the persons whose names are assumed are in Turkey?"

"I can."

"Very good," said the prefect, arising, to intimate that the intercourse was over.

"Our men shall be there in force for the capture."

CHAPTER III.

THE HARKAWAY'S GUIDE—LENOIR'S MUSEUM—THE MEDALS—A COINER'S TRADE—AN ALARM—A DESPERATE FELLOW.

"HERE we are again, sir," said Harry Girdwood, stepping up to Pierre Lenoir, "but I fear we are taking a great liberty in asking you to *cicerone* such a large party as we muster here."

Lenoir smiled.

It was not a free, frank smile.

To tell the truth, he was a bit annoyed, for besides the two youths there was Mole, and the attendant darkies with them, Tinker and Bogey.

Lenoir was a cautious man.

"Are they friends and confidants of yours?" he asked, rather pointedly.

"Oh, yes, they are our confidential friends," returned Harry Girdwood, smiling.

"Very good, let us begin our look around. We will walk along the quays if you like, and thence past the Hotel de Ville. I shall show you several objects of undoubted interest," said Lenoir, significantly.

He led the way on.

Jack fell back a few paces, walking on with Harry Girdwood.

"He's a very odd fellow," whispered the latter.

Lenoir led them over the town before he ventured to approach the Caveaux.

"I have a little museum not far away," he said.

"I am afraid we shall be intruding," began Jack.

"Not a bit," protested Lenoir.

The snuggery in question was situated at some little distance from the town and away from the main road.

The cottage was only a one-story building.

"His museum is not very extensive," whispered Harry Girdwood to his companion, "if it is in that cottage."

They had reached the threshold and opening the door, he led the way in.

It was a neat little cottage interior, with nothing about it to attract attention.

Passing through the first room, Lenoir conducted them to a sort of out-house beyond.

Here they came upon the first surprise.

He opened a door which apparently shut in a cupboard, and this, to their intense astonishment, revealed a flight of stone steps, which seemingly led into the very bowels of the earth.

"Halloo!" exclaimed Jack, "why, what's this?"

"I thought I should astonish you now," said Lenoir, with his same calm smile.

"What is this place?"

"There is a whole series of caves below these, apparently natural formations. The only way I can account for them myself is that at some time or other some experimental mining operations have gone on there. Would you like to go down and see the place?"

"With pleasure," returned Jack, eagerly.

"Allow me to lead the way."

When they had descended a few steps, Jack half repented.

Had this man any evil purpose in bringing them there?

Jack stood wavering for a few seconds.

"We are four," he said to himself, "four without counting Mr. Mole; they must be a pretty tough lot to frighten us much, after all said and done."

So saying, down he went.

The others followed close behind him.

At the base of the flight of steps they found themselves in a spacious vault that was unpleasantly dark.

"Allow me to lead the way now," said Lenoir, passing on. "Follow me closely; there is no fear of stumbling, there is nothing in the way."

So saying, he conducted them through this opening, which, by the way, was so low that they had to stoop in passing under, and found themselves now in the narrow cave, which reminded young Jack forcibly of the dungeon and its approach of Sir Walter Raleigh in the Tower of London.

"What do you think of this place?" demanded the guide.

"A very curious sight," was the reply. "You put all this space to no use?"

"Pardon me," said Lenoir; "I practice my favorite hobby here."

"Here!"

"Yes—or rather in the next cellar beyond."

"And what may be that favorite hobby?"

"Medalling," was Lenoir's reply.

And again he shot at his questioners one of those peculiar glances which had so astonished them before.

"I should like to see some of your work," said Jack.

"I thought you would," said Lenoir, with a quiet chuckle.

Lenoir led the way into the next cellar or cavern, and here they came suddenly upon a change of scene.

Here they saw a furnace, with melting pots, bars of metal, moulds, files, batteries, and all the necessary accessories for the manufacture of medals.

Upon a flat stone slab was a pile of medals all of the same pattern precisely.

"Just examine those, Mr. Harkaway," said Pierre Lenoir, "and tell me what you think of them."

Jack put his finger through the glittering heap, and they fell to the table with a bright clear ring that considerably astonished them.

"Why, they are silver!"

Lenoir smiled.

"Very good, aren't they?"

"Very!"

Jack here made a discovery, upon examining them more closely.

"They are five-franc pieces!" he said, with a puzzled expression.

"Of course they are—and beauties they are, too!"

"There's not much risk in getting rid of these, I should say?"

"Risk!" iterated Harry Girdwood.

"Ay!"

"Why risk?"

"I mean that no one could detect the difference very easily. Why, they deceived you," he added, turning to Jack, with an air of conscious pride.

"Upon my life, I don't understand what you mean," said Jack.

Lenoir looked serious for a moment.

Then he burst out into a boisterous fit of merriment.

"You are really over-cautious, young gentleman," he said.

"Over-cautious?"

"Why, yes—why, yes. Wherefore this reserve? Why should you pretend not to understand? Don't you see," he added, with a cunning leer, "that I can make these medals as perfectly as they can at the Hotel de la Monnaie, our French Mint?"

"So I see," said Jack.

A faint light began to dawn upon Harry Girdwood—not too soon, the reader will say.

"It is rather a dangerous pastime, Mr. Lenoir, this medalling fancy of yours," he said.

"No," said Lenoir, pointedly, "the danger is not there; the danger of this pastime, as you call it, is in disposing of my beautiful medals."

"Dear me, sir," said Mr. Mole. "Do you sell them?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"The five-franc pieces two francs and a half," replied Lenoir, "and so on throughout until we get up to the louis, the twenty-franc pieces; those I can do for seven francs. You can pass them without risk."

This told all.

Jack and his friends were astounded.

"Are you making us overtures to join you in passing bad money?" demanded young Jack.

"Not bad money," returned Lenoir, "very good money—all my own make."

"It is very evident that you do not know us,"

said Harry Girdwood, "and so are considerably mistaken. Why you have brought us here and placed yourself in our power, it is utterly beyond me to understand."

Lenoir stared.

"What!"

"The position is most embarrassing," said Jack. "To do our duty would be to repay by great ingratitude your kindness in guiding us about the town, for we ought to denounce you to the police authorities."

This speech partook of the nature of a threat, and Pierre Lenoir was up in an instant.

"The worst day's work of your life would be that," he said, fiercely. "No man plays traitor to Pierre Lenoir a second time."

"Traitor is a wrong term," said Jack; "we are not sworn to share such confidences as yours. We shall leave you now, but—"

"Stop!"

They were moving towards the entrance, when Lenoir sprang before them, and whipped out a brace of revolvers.

The position grew exciting and unpleasant.

"Stand out of the way and let us pass," exclaimed Jack, impetuously.

"Don't come any nearer," said Lenoir, with quiet determination, "for I warn you that it would be dangerous. You can't move from this place until you have made terms with me."

"I, for one, will have nothing whatever to say to you!" said Jack, haughtily. "I don't care to bargain with a coiner."

With his old foolhardy way he was stepping forward, in peril of his very life.

Lenoir was a desperate man in a desperate strait.

His finger trembled upon the trigger.

"Stand back, on your life!"

"You stand aside!" cried Jack.

"Another step and I fire!" cried Lenoir.

"Bah!"

Jack pushed on.

Lenoir pulled the trigger.

Bang it went.

But the ball whistled harmlessly over Jack's head, and lodged in the slanting roof.

A friendly hand from behind the coiner had knocked up his arm in the very nick of time.

At the self-same instant some eight or ten men, fully armed, burst into the vault.

One of them, who was apparently in command, pointed to Lenoir, and said to the others:

"Arrest that man. He's the leader of them."

And before the coiner could offer any resistance, they knocked his weapons from his hands, and fell upon him.

But Lenoir was a powerful fellow—a desperate, determined man, and not so easily disposed of.

With wonderful energy, he tore himself from them, and, producing something from one of his pockets, he held it menacingly up.

"Advance a step," he exclaimed, "and I will blow you all to atoms, myself as well. Beware! I hold all our lives in my hand. Now who dares advance?"

CHAPTER IV.

LENOIR'S FLIGHT—MURRAY THE TRAITOR—HIS PUNISHMENT AND FLIGHT—A LONG RUN—THE AUBERGE—A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE.

THERE was a pause.

Pierre Lenoir looked like mischief.

His position was desperate, and they judged, and rightly judged, that he was a man not likely to stick at a trifle.

The men looked at their officer, and the latter, a man of intelligence and prudence, albeit no coward, reflected seriously.

Several terrible calamities, accidental and intentional, had of late opened the eyes of the public to the destructive properties of dynamite, and to that his thoughts flew.

He wavered.

The coiner saw his chance, and quick to act as to think, he made for the exit.

"Stand back!" he cried, fiercely, to the men who made a faint show of barring his passage. "I'll finish you all off at a stroke if you attempt to oppose me!"

They fell back alarmed.

Lenoir darted on through the inner vault, and so on until he gained the flight of steps.

Reaching the top, he darted through the cottage, and reaching the open, suddenly found himself in the midst of about a dozen men.

The first person upon whom his glance rested, was the doubly-dyed traitor who had betrayed him solely to serve his own ends, by entrapping Jack Harkaway, the Englishman, who must

have been recognized by the reader, in spite of his assumed name, as Herbert Murray.

Instinctively Lenoir divined that his betrayer was the young Englishman.

No sooner did this conclusion force itself upon him than all thought of personal danger vanished from his mind, and he was possessed by one sole idea, one single desire. Revenge!

He lost sight of the peril which he ran, but with a cry like the roar of a wounded lion he sprang upon the traitor.

A brawny, powerful fellow was Pierre Lenoir, and Herbert Murray was but a puny thing in his grasp.

"Hands off!" exclaimed Murray, in desperation.

Lenoir growled, but said nothing, as he shook him much as a terrier does a rat.

Before the police could interfere in the spy's behalf, Lenoir held him with one hand at arm's length, while with the other he prepared to deliver a fearful blow.

The energy of despair seized on the hapless traitor, and wrenching himself free from the coiner's grasp, he fled.

Pierre Lenoir stood staring about him a second. Then he made after him.

Away went pursuer and pursued. The terror-stricken Murray got over the ground like a hare, and although the coiner was fleet of foot, he was at first distanced in the race.

It became a desperate race between them.

Lenoir tore on.

He would have his betrayer now or perish.

But before he had got more than two hundred yards the pace began to tell upon him.

He felt that he would have to give in.

"I must go easier, or I shall fail altogether."

So reasoning, he slackened his pace, and dropped into that slinging trot that runners in France know as the *pas gymnastique*.

If your strength and wind are of average quality, you can keep up for a prodigious time at that.

Murray flew on, anxious to get away from his furious pursuer.

He increased his lead.

But presently the pace told upon him likewise. He collected his thoughts and his prudence as he went, and rested.

Glancing over his shoulder, he saw Lenoir come bounding along, a considerable distance in the rear.

"Savage beast!" thought Murray. "He means mischief."

Murray meant tiring him out.

This, however, was not so easily done.

The Englishman was a capital runner, and had been one of the crack men of his school-club.

But his *forte* was pace.

The Frenchman, on the contrary, was a stay-er.

It looked bad for Murray.

On they went, and when a good mile had been covered, Murray, on glancing back, felt convinced that it was only a question of time.

He must tire out the Frenchman in the end, he thought.

He believed that an Englishman must always be more than a match for a Frenchman at any kind of athletics.

He reckoned without his host, for while he (Murray) was getting blown, Lenoir swung on at his *pas gymnastique*, having got his second wind, and being, to all appearance, capable of keeping on for any length of time.

"I shall have to give it up," gasped Murray, when, at the end of the second mile, he looked over his shoulder again.

An unpleasant fact revealed itself.

While he was faltering, the Frenchman was rather improving his pace.

Yes.

The distance between them was lessening.

And now he could hear Lenoir's menaces quite plainly as the coiner gained upon him.

"I shall have you directly, and I shall beat your skull in!" the Frenchman said.

Murray's craven heart leaped to his mouth. Already he felt as if his cranium was cracked by the brutal fist of the savage coiner.

Fear lent him wings.

He put on a spurt.

"Oh, if I had but a pistol!" thought Murray; "what a fool I was to come unarmed on such a job as this."

He partially flagged again.

The distance between them was still decreasing.

This he felt was the beginning of the end, but just as he was thinking that there was nothing for it but to turn and make the best fight he could, he sighted a roadside inn—a rural auberge.

And for this he flew with renewed energy. Dashing into the house, he pushed to the door and startled the aubergiste by gasping out in the best French he could command:

*Un assassin me poursuit Cachez-moi, ou donnez-moi de quoi me défendre!**

The landlord took Murray—and not unnaturally—for a madman.

He did not like the society of madmen.

To give a weapon to a furious maniac was out of all question.

And the landlord had nothing handy of a more deadly nature than a knife and fork.

Moreover he would not have cared to place a dangerous weapon in a madman's hands.

So he met the case by humoring the fugitive with a proposal to go up stairs.

Murray wanted no second invitation.

Up he flew, and locked himself in one of the upper rooms just as Lenoir hammered at the door below.

"Où est-il?"† demanded the coiner, fiercely.

"Qui?"‡

"Ne cherchez pas à me tricher," thundered Lenoir. "Il m'appartient. Où est-il, je vous le demande?"§

The coiner's manner made the aubergiste uneasy, and thoughtful for his own safety.

So he pointed up stairs.

Up went Lenoir, and finding a room door locked, he flung his whole weight against the door and sent it in.

This was the room which the fugitive had entered.

But where was Murray?

Gone!

Vanished!

But where?

CHAPTER V.

THE COINER AND THE SPY—A REGULAR DUST-UP, AND WHAT CAME OF IT—THE CHASE—AN ODD ESCAPE—HUNTED IN THE HAY—A ROUGH CUSTOMER DONE FOR.

WHEN Lenoir had puzzled himself for some time over the mysterious disappearance of Herbert Murray for awhile, he made a discovery.

The window was open, a circumstance which he had, until then, in the most unaccountable manner imaginable, overlooked.

But when he got to the window and looked out, there were no signs of the object of his search.

He had followed so sharply that Murray could not have had time to get off.

He looked up and down the road eagerly.

The only thing in sight was a wagon load of hay, drawn by a team of horses, at whose head plodded a wagoner in a blue cotton blouse, whip in hand.

"*He, la bas!*" shouted the coiner from the window.

The wagoner turned, and looked eagerly up.

"*Qu'avez-vous?*" demanded the wagoner. "What's the matter?"

"Have you seen anyone jump out of this window?" shouted Lenoir.

The wagoner responded tartly, for he fancied that his questioner was trying to chaff him.

"I've seen no one mad enough for that; in fact, I've seen no one madder than you since I've been in this part of the country."

"*Espece de voyou!*" cried the irritable Lenoir, "*je te ficherais une danse si j'avais le temps pour t'apprendre ce que c'est que la politesse.*" I'd dust your jacket for you if I had the time to teach you politeness."

"You're not likely to have time enough for that as long as you live, *espece de pignouf.*"

"Idiot!"

"Imbecile!"

This interchange of compliments appeared to relieve the belligerent parties considerably.

Lenoir was obliged to give it up for a bad job.

Suddenly a singular idea shot into his head.

The hay cart!

What if Herbert Murray had got into it unseen and was there now, without his presence being suspected by the wagoner?

Lenoir reflected for a moment.

Then he darted down the stairs in pursuit of the wagon.

"Halloo, there, driver!" he shouted.

The wagoner looked over his shoulder and recognized Lenoir.

So he whipped up.

The best pace that even a stout team of horses could put on, with a big load of hay behind them, was not to say race-horse speed, so the coiner soon caught them up.

The wagoner awaited his approach, grasping his whip with a nervous grip that foreboded mischief.

On came Lenoir.

"I say, my friend," he called out, "I think you have a man concealed in the cart!"

"*Va-t-en!*—get out!" retorted the wagoner.

"I am serious. Will you oblige me by pulling up and looking?"

"Not exactly."

Lenoir had a very limited stock of patience, and he soon came to the end of it.

He ran to the leading horse and pulled it up sharply.

The wagoner swore and lashed up.

But Lenoir turning his attention next to the shaft horse, pulled the wagon up to a standstill.

And the wagoner, furious at this, lashed Lenoir.

The whip caught him around the head and shoulders, curling about so that the man could not get it free.

Lenoir caught at the thong, and with a sudden jerk, brought the wagoner down from his seat.

Now began as pretty a little skirmish as you could wish to see.

The wagoner fell an easy prey to the furious coiner at first.

He was half dazed with being jerked down to the ground.

But he soon recovered himself.

Then he set to punching at Lenoir with all his strength.

Then they grappled fiercely with each other.

A desperate struggle for supremacy ensued.

At length Lenoir's superior strength and science prevailed, tough as the wagoner was.

The latter lay under the coiner, whose knee pressed cruelly upon his chest.

"Now ask my pardon," said Lenoir.

"Never!" roared the defeated wagoner, stoutly.

"I shall kill you if you don't," said Lenoir, threateningly.

"Mind you don't get finished off first," said the wagoner, significantly.

As he spoke he was looking up over his conqueror's shoulder.

Lenoir perceived this, but thought it only a ruse to get him to shift his hold.

So, with a contemptuous smile, he raised his clenched fist to deal the luckless wagoner a blow that was to knock every scrap of sense out of his unfortunate cranium.

"Take that!"

But before the wagoner could get it, Lenoir received something himself that sent him to earth with a hollow groan—felled like a bullock beneath the butcher's pole-ax.

Somebody had after all been concealed in the wagon.

That somebody was Herbert Murray himself.

The English youth had heard the scuffle, and seeing his opportunity, he slid out of his place of concealment and joined in the fight at the very right moment.

* * * * *

The wagoner shook himself together.

"That was neatly done, *camarade*," he said.

"I was just in time," said Murray; "look after him. He is wanted by the police; a desperate customer. They are after him now."

"He's very quiet," said the wagoner, with a curious glance.

"He's not dead," returned Murray; "he has his destiny to fulfil yet."

"What may that be?"

"The galleys," was the reply.

The wagoner stared hard at young Murray.

"I don't like the look of you much more than that of the beast lying there," he thought to himself; "mind you don't keep him company in the galleys."

An odd fancy to cross a stranger's mind.

Was it prophetic?

CHAPTER VI.

PLANS FOR OUR FRIENDS' RELEASE—MURRAY'S COUNTERPLOT—THE LETTER, AND HOW IT WAS INTERCEPTED—HERBERT MURRAY TRIUMPHS—CHIVEY WORKS THE ARTFUL DODGE.

"WELL!" exclaimed the unfortunate Mole, "this is a nice go!"

"I'm glad you think it nice," said young Jack, bitterly.

As they spoke, they were being led through the streets of Marseilles, handcuffed and two abreast, with a brace of gendarmes between each couple.

The people flocked out to stare at the "notorious gang of forgers, which"—so ran the report—"had just been captured by the police, after making a desperate resistance."

The first impulse of Jack Harkaway himself had been naturally to resist his captors.

But he was speedily shown the uselessness of such a course.

When they were brought up before the judge for examination, they protested their innocence, and told the simple truth.

But this did not avail them.

Herbert Murray had prepared the way for their statements to be regarded as falsehoods.

By this means, when Jack protested that his name was Harkaway, it went clearly against him, inasmuch as it corroborated what Murray had said.

So they were remanded, one and all, and sent back to their cells.

Mr. Mole's indignation could not be subdued.

"These people are worse than savages!" he exclaimed; "but we'll let them know. They shall make us ample reparation for this indignity."

He talked threateningly of the British ambassador, and made all kinds of threats.

But he was pooh-poohed by the authorities.

Harry Girdwood was the only one of the party who kept his coolness.

He put forth his request with so much earnestness, to be allowed to see the English consul, that his request was granted at once.

He drew up a letter and entrusted it to the jailer, who promised to have it forwarded.

Now this became known to Herbert Murray, and he then saw that he had still a task of no ordinary difficulty before him—that it was not sufficient alone to have his hated enemies arrested.

The greater difficulty by far was to keep them now that he had secured them.

In this crisis he once more consulted with his worthless servant and confederate, Chivey.

"Our next job," said Chivey, doubtfully, "is to get at the jailer, and stop the letter he has received from reaching its destination."

"How would you set to work?" demanded the master.

"You do what you can inside," said Chivey, "and I'll lay in wait for the messenger with the letter outside in case you fail."

"Good."

"You can buy that jailer," said the tiger.

"I will."

"Do so. Your task is the easier of the two. Ten francs ought to square him."

"It ought," said Murray; "but I question if it will."

* * * * *

Murray was doomed to a sad disappointment in his operations, for do what he would, he could not "get at" the man charged with delivering the Harkaways' letters.

But he contrived to ascertain who the man was, and to give a description of him to the tiger.

Chivey saw the man come out of the prison, and he thought over various plans for getting hold of the letter which he knew he must be carrying.

His first idea was to go up to him and address him straight off upon the subject, but this would not do.

The messenger would in all probability take the alarm.

He next had an idea of following up the messenger, and after giving him a crack on the head, rifling his pockets.

This idea he abandoned even sooner than the first, and this for sundry wholesome reasons.

Firstly, the man's road did not lead him into any sufficiently quiet places for such an attempt.

Secondly, the man was a tough-looking customer, and an awkward fellow to tackle.

And thirdly—but the second reason sufficed to send Chivey's mind away from all ideas of violence.

No; deeds of daring were not at all in Chivey's line.

He had a notion, however, and this was to go as fast as he could to the British consul's, and there to be ready for the messenger when he came.

His plans were not more matured than this, but chance seemed to very much favor this precious pair of youthful scamps—for the time being, at any rate.

* * * * *

* "I am pursued by an assassin. Hide me, or give me something to defend myself with."

† "Where is he?"

‡ "Who?"

§ "Seek not to deceive me," thundered Lenoir. "He belongs to me. Where is he, I ask you again?"

Chivey timed his own arrival at the consul's residence, so as to be there just a few minutes in advance of the prison messenger.

The servant who admitted him was an Englishman, and told Chivey that he was particularly engaged just then, and would not be visible for some considerable time.

"Be so good as to ask when I can see your master," said Chivey, with an air of lofty condescension.

"I must not disturb him now," said the servant.

"He will be very vexed with you if you don't," returned Chivey, "when he knows my business."

The servant being duly impressed with this threat, went off at once to obey the insidious tiger, who of course was not in livery.

Barely had the consul's servant disappeared, when the messenger from the prison entered.

Chivey recognized him instantly.

"Une lettre pour Monsieur le Consul," said the messenger.

Chivey held out his hand, and the man, taking it for granted that Chivey belonged to the consular establishment, gave it to him.

"Il y a une reponse—there is an answer," said the messenger.

"It will be forwarded," returned Chivey, with cool presence of mind.

"I ought to take it with me," said the messenger.

"I can't disturb his excellency now," replied the tiger; "those are my master's express orders, which I can't presume to disobey. He will send the answer on immediately it is ready."

The man paused.

"The consul was expecting this letter," said Chivey, moving towards the door; "and he told me particularly that he would send the answer on."

"Puisqu'il est ainsi," said the man, dubiously. "Since it must be so, I suppose I had better leave the letter."

"Of course you had," returned Chivey, closing the door. "I daresay you will get the answer within an hour."

At that very moment the servant returned with a message from the consul to the effect that in half an hour he could be seen, if the applicant would call again.

"Very good," said Chivey, in the same patronizing manner; "you may tell your master that I will look back later on."

"Very well, sir."

Chivey walked out, chuckling inwardly at the success of his mission.

"What could be easier?" said the Cockney scamp to himself; "shelling peas is a fool to it."

But before he could get fairly over the threshold, the servant stopped him with a question that startled him a little, and a well-nigh made him lose his presence of mind.

"The man who called just now, sir, he left a letter."

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

"For you, sir?"

"Yes," added Chivey, with the coolest effrontery. "My servant knew that I had come on here; thinking to be detained some time with his excellency the consul, I left word at my hotel where I was coming, and he followed me here with a letter."

"Oh, I see, sir," returned the servant, obsequiously, "quite so, sir, beg pardon, sir."

"Not at all, my good man, not at all," returned Chivey, superciliously; "you are a very civil, well-spoken young man—here is a trifle for you."

He passed the servant a large silver coin, and walked on.

The servant bowed again and examined the coin, in the process of bobbing his head.

"Five francs," said the consul's servant, to himself: "he's a real swell, anyone can see."

One word more.

The five-franc piece which had in no slight degree biased the servant's opinion of the visitor, was one of Pierre Lenoir's admirable manufacture.

* * * * *

"Let's have a look at the letter, Chivey," said Herbert Murray, as soon as his servant got back. But Chivey seemed to hesitate.

"Come—come," said Murray, "we shall not quarrel about the terms."

"We oughtn't to," returned the tiger, "for it's worth a Jew's eye."

Murray tore the letter open and read it down eagerly.

As it throws some additional light upon the actual state of affairs with the Harkaway party, possibly it may be as well to give the letter to young Jack to the consul verbatim.

It was dated from the prison.

"SIR:—I wish to solicit your immediate assistance in getting released from the above uncomfortable premises, where, in company with a party of friends and fellow-travelers, I have been by a singular accident carried by the police. From scraps of information I have gained while here, I believe I am correct in asserting that we have fallen into a trap, cunningly prepared for us by an unscrupulous fellow-countryman of ours, who has cogent reasons for wishing us out of the way, and has accordingly caused me and my friends to be arrested as coiners. The person in question is named Herbert Murray, but I am unable to say under what *alias* he is at present known in this part of the world. I mention this that you may be able to keep an eye upon the individual pending our release on bail, for I presume that bail is a French institution. My signature will serve you for reference on me, as it may readily be identified at my father's bankers here, Messrs. B. Fould and Co.

"Your obedient servant,

"JACK HARKAWAY."

Herbert Murray pursed his brows as he read on.

"What do you think of that?" demanded Chivey.

"Queer!"

"Precious queer."

"The one lesson to be learned from it, Chivey," said his master, "is to stop all correspondence between the prisoners and the consul."

"And push forward the trial as much as possible."

"Yes, and get together as many reliable witnesses as we can—"

"Buy them at a pound apiece," concluded Chivey.

"Right," said Herbert Murray, with a mischievous grin; "forewarned, forearmed; we hold them now and we'll keep them—"

"Please the pigs," concluded Chivey, fervently.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR FRIENDS IN DURANCE VILE—A STROKE FOR LIBERTY—THE PRISONERS' PLOT—MOLE IS PRESCRIBED FOR—A FRIEND IN NEED—HOPES AND MISGIVINGS—"OLD WET BLANKET."

"It's very odd."

"Very."

"And scarcely polite," suggested Mr. Mole.

"Well, scarcely."

"That makes the fourth letter I have written to him, and he doesn't even condescend to notice them."

"Very odd."

"Very."

But while all the sufferers by the seeming neglect of the consul were expressing themselves so freely in the matter, old Sobersides, as Jack called his comrade, Harry Girdwood, remained silent and meditative.

Jack had great faith in his thoughtful chum.

"A penny for your thoughts, Harry," said he.

"I'll give them for nix," returned Harry Girdwood, gaily.

"Out with it."

"I was wondering whether, while you are all blaming the poor consul, he has ever received your letters."

"What, the four?"

"Yes."

"Of course."

"I don't see it."

"But my dear fellow, consider. One may have miscarried—or two—but hang it! all four can't have gone wrong."

"Of course not," said Mole, with the air of a man who puts a final stop to all arguments.

"There I beg leave to differ with you all."

"Why?"

"The letters have not reached the consul, perhaps; they may have been intercepted."

"By whom?" was Jack's natural question.

"Can't say positively; possibly by Murray."

"Is it likely?"

"Is it not?"

"I don't see, unless he bought over the messenger."

"And what is more likely than that!" said Harry. "And if they have bought over one messenger, it is for good and all, not for a single letter, but for every scrap of paper you may send out of the prison, you may depend upon it."

This simple reasoning struck his hearers.

"Upon my life!" exclaimed Jack, "I believe Harry's right. We must tackle the governor."

"So I think."

"And I, too," added Harry Girdwood; "but how?"

"I'll write him a letter."

"Yes; and send it to him by the jailer," said Harry.

"Yes."

"The jailer who carried all the other letters? Why, Jack—Jack, what a thoughtless, rattle-brained chap you are. What on earth is the use of such a move as that?"

Jack's countenance fell again at this.

"You're right, Harry. I go jumping like a bull at a gate as usual. What would you do?"

Harry's answer was brief and sententious.

"Think."

"Do so, mate," returned Jack, hopefully again; "do so."

"I will."

He pressed his lips and knit his brows with a burlesque, melodramatic air, and strode up and down, with his forefinger to his forehead.

He stopped suddenly and stamped twice, as a haughty earl might do in a transpontine tragedy when resolving upon his crowning villany, and exclaimed in a voice suggestive of fiend-like triumph:

"I have it."

"Hold it tight, then."

"One of us must sham ill so as to get the doctor here. Once he's here, we shall be all right."

"Hurrah!" cried Jack Harkaway; "that's the notion. We shall yet defeat the schemes of that incarnate fiend, Murray."

"That is a capital idea," said Mr. Mole. "You have suggested quite a new idea."

"Now stop; the next thing for us to think of is who is to be the sham invalid," said Jack.

"I would suggest Tinker," said Harry.

"Or Bogey," observed Mr. Mole.

"Why?"

"Because it would not be easy to tell whether they looked in delicate health or not."

"There's something in that," said Jack, "but there's this to say against it."

"What?"

"They might not be able to keep the game up so well as one of ourselves, so I think—"

Here Jack paused, while Harry and he exchanged a meaning wink unobserved by the old gentleman.

"I think that it ought to be Mr. Mole," continued our hero.

"Why?"

"Why, sir; can you ask why? You are such a lovely shammer."

"Come, I say," began Mr. Mole, scarcely relishing it.

"He's quite right, sir," said Harry Girdwood; "you are inimitable as a shammer."

"I?"

"You can pitch it so strong, Mr. Mole," said Jack.

"And so natural," added Harry Girdwood.

"Life-like," said the two together, in mingled tones of rapt admiration.

Mr. Mole was but human.

Humanity is but frail, and ever open to the voice of flattery.

What could Mole do but yield?

Nothing.

He gave in, and shammed very ill indeed.

Well, the result of this was that the jailer made his report, and the doctor came.

"De quoi se plaint-il?" demanded the doctor, as he entered the cell.

"What does he say?" asked Mole; "I'm as deaf as an adder."

"The doctor asks what you complain of?" said Jack, in a very loud voice.

"Oh, anything he likes," returned Mole, impatiently.

They were on the point of bursting out laughing at this, when the doctor startled them considerably by saying, in broken (but understandable) English:

"What he say—anything I like? *Singulier!*"

"Ahem!"

Harry Girdwood gave the word; a glance of intelligence went around.

They, to use Jack's expression, pulled themselves together and looked serious.

"It is headache," said Jack. "Violent headache, he says."

"Yes," said Mole.

"Show your tongue."

Mole thrust it out, and then the doctor felt his pulse.

"Very bad; you have the fever."

"What?" ejaculated Mole, aghast.

"You have the fever."

"What sort?"

The surgeon looked puzzled.

"Typhus or scarlet, I should say," suggested Jack.

"What is that?" demanded the French doctor, curiously. "*Je ne suis pas très fort*—I am not very strong in English."

"Then, sir," said Jack, "pray accept my compliments upon your proficiency; it is really very remarkable."

"You are very good to say that," returned the surgeon; "*mais*—now for our *malade*—what is *malade* in English?"

"Patient."

"Patient! Well, I hope that he will justify *ze* designation. What do you feel?" he added to Mr. Mole.

"Rush of blood to the head," said Mole, thinking this quite a safe symptom to announce.

"Yes—yes—*sans doute*—no doubt," said the doctor, looking as wise as an owl. "We can make that better for you quick—a little *sinapisme*."

"That's what you call a mustard plaster, isn't it?" said Harry.

"*Sinapisme*—mustard who?" demanded the French doctor of Jack.

"Plaster."

"*Merçi*."

"I'm not going to have any mustard plaster on," said Mole.

"*Comment!*" exclaimed the doctor: "*il n'en veut pas!* he will not! *Morbleu!* *Ze* prisonniers have what *ze* docteur ordonnances."

"Will he?"

"Yes. You are quite right, doctor," said Jack, in French. "Where is he to have on the plaster?"

"On his legs, at the back of his ankles," replied the doctor; "it is to draw the blood from his head."

"Very good, sir."

Jack translated, and the patient, singularly enough, grew reassured immediately.

"It won't hurt much on the back of your legs, Mr. Mole," said Harry.

They enjoyed a quiet grin to themselves at this.

The prison doctor then sent the jailer for writing materials for the purpose of writing out a prescription.

Then was their chance.

"Doctor," said Jack, "I want to see the governor."

"Why have you not asked, then, through the jailer?"

"I prefer some other method."

"Why?"

"Because I don't know whether the gaoler is safe."

"I don't understand you," said the doctor.

"I have written four letters to the British consul," returned Jack, and no answer has come."

"Well?"

"Well, sir, I'm afraid he has never received the letters."

"Why?"

"Because my name is well known to him, and he would have replied. I have referred him to the chief banker of the town, who can readily identify me through my signature. I wish them to communicate with my father, and, in a word, to show the authorities how utterly ridiculous and preposterous is the charge against us in spite of appearances."

Jack's earnestness caught his attention.

"They would never dare to keep letters back."

"Money has tempted them, I feel assured."

"Whose money?"

"The money of a spy—a fellow countryman of ours, who has interest in keeping me out of the way."

"His name?"

"His real name is Herbert Murray, his assumed name is Markby."

"Markby; I know that name. Of course; he is the principal witness against you. You say his assumed name?"

"Yes."

"Can you prove it?"

"Easily; if I can get at the means of establishing a defense. It is to effect this that I have addressed myself to the consul, but he does not reply, so that, monstrous and absurd as this charge is, we are unable to disprove it, simply because here we are tied hand and foot."

"This is very strange."

"The doctor, as he spoke, shot them a dubious glance, which did not escape Jack."

"I tell you, sir, that my father is rich and influential. Moreover, he is exceedingly liberal in money matters with me. I have not the slightest need to add to my income by any means whatever, much less dishonest courses."

"What proof can I offer to the governor?"

"Plenty," returned Jack, eagerly. "Here is my father's address in England; let him be com-

municated with immediately. This Markby is an unscrupulous rascal. He has forged my name to several checks and robbed me. He fears detection, and has built up a cunning plot, using the coiner, Lenoir, as his catspaw, and while we are caged here upon this ridiculous charge, he can get off to another part of the world."

This convinced the prison surgeon completely.

"I will see the governor at once," said he; "meanwhile, see that your obstinate old friend attends to my instructions, and he will soon be well."

"Excuse me, doctor," said Jack; "but the honest truth is that he is not sick at all."

"Not ill?"

"No. We doubted the jailer's honesty, and fearing he was bought over by our enemy, adopted this ruse."

"To see me?"

"Yes."

"Ha—ha! I see it all now; very ingenious on your part. Well—well, my young friend, I will see the governor at once, and you shall not be long in trouble."

"You will earn my eternal gratitude, and that of my fellow prisoners, as well as the much more substantial acknowledgement of my father."

"*Bien—bien!*" said the surgeon, smiling. "*Au revoir!*"

And bowing pleasantly to the prisoners generally, the doctor left the cell.

* * * * *

"There," said Jack. "You may look upon that as settled, so comfort yourselves."

"He has gone to the governor?" asked Mole.

"Yes."

"Hurrah!"

"I hope it will go all right now," said Harry Girdwood, who was scarcely so cheerful as his companions.

"You wretched old wet blanket," exclaimed Jack, gaily, "of course it will."

"Of course," added Mole.

"You may consider yourself as good as outside the prison already."

"I do, for one," said Mole, quite hilarious at the prospect.

"Humph!" said Harry.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DOCTOR AND THE GOVERNOR—HOW THE PLOT WORKS IN FAVOR OF JACK'S ENEMIES—UNLUCKY PRISONERS.

"SAPRISTI!"

Thus spake the governor of the prison.

The occasion was within a few minutes of the doctor's entrance into his private cabinet, to which the medico had gone immediately after quitting the English prisoners.

"*Sapristi!*"

"Well, what they say is very easily verified," said the doctor, rather tartly.

The fact is that he was somewhat nettled at the doubting expression with which the governor met his account of his interview with Jack Harkaway and his fellow prisoners.

"My dear Doctor Berteaux," returned the governor, with the most irritating smile, "this youth is a notorious young scoundrel. Just see how clever he must be, too; he has actually imposed upon the astute Doctor Berteaux, who has such a vast experience among criminals."

"But, sir—"

"I tell you, doctor, I know all about this young scoundrel from A to Z. His real name is Herbert Murray."

"Why, that he said was the real name of the agent Markby," exclaimed the doctor.

"The deuce he did. Egad! doctor, that's beautiful."

And the governor chuckled rarely at the idea. The doctor began to look a little uncomfortable.

"Do you mean to say—"

"That you have been egregiously humbugged? Yes, that's exactly what I do mean. Why, doctor—doctor, at your time of life consider."

"But—"

"Come—come, get rid of this silly fancy, old friend."

"At least," insisted the doctor, "do me the favor to communicate with the consul."

"Indeed, I shall do nothing of the kind. You can see the British consul if you like, and a rare laugh he'll enjoy at your expense when he sees how you have been duped by this young scoundrel."

"Ahem!"

* * * * *

Well, the doctor did not communicate with the consul after this, and Jack Harkaway waited

with his companions, Mole and the "wet blanket," Harry Girdwood, and the two faithful dark eyes, and waited in vain.

Waited until they grew heart-sick with hope deferred.

CHAPTER IX.

JOE DEERING AT HOME AGAIN—ON THE-LOOKOUT—NEWS AT LAST—JOVIAL CAPTAIN ROBINSON IN DANGER.

We must cross the channel to England again. But not for long.

One character in our drama of real life has not appeared upon the scene for some time.

We allude to the skipper of the *Albatross*, Joe Deering.

Captain Deering had finished his course and returned to his native land.

He was anxious to get home, for he had a purpose in view.

He wished to route out two men to whom he owed a very deep grudge, which he was fully determined to pay off.

One was Mr. Murray, the treacherous owner of the ill-fated *Albatross*, for Captain Deering, it should be borne in mind, was ignorant of the wretched man's well-merited fate.

The other was that traitor friend of his, the accomplice of the elder Murray—jovial Captain Robinson.

Joe Deering was in earnest, and he pursued his inquiries with the utmost diligence.

The jovial captain was not to be heard of anywhere at first.

But Joe Deering, baffled here, like a skilled mariner as he was, set out on another tack.

He made his inquiries for Mr. Murray alone.

"Where one thief is," said Joe, to himself, "the other murdering scoundrel is sure to be not far off."

For some time his search proved unavailing again, but he was presently rewarded for his perseverance by the first gleam of good luck.

He learned the late address of Murray, senior.

"This is a step in the right direction," said Joe Deering, with a chuckle.

So with renewed hope he went to the house.

"Mr. Murray ain't been home for many months, sir," said the housekeeper, in reply to Deering's inquiry, "and I haven't any news of him since goodness knows when."

"You don't mean that?" said Deering, aghast.

"Indeed, but I do, and I hope that you're not going to misbelieve me like that Captain Robinson, that calls here every—"

"What?" ejaculated Deering. "Avast there. Captain Robinson, did you say?"

"Yes."

"Do you know him?"

"I can't very well be off knowing him, seeing as he's here about twice a day, and I know he never wished my poor master no good."

"What makes you think that?" asked Joe Deering.

"Master used always to try to avoid seeing him, poor old gentleman," replied the housekeeper.

"Why do you call him 'poor old gentleman?'"

"Because I know he suffered dreadfully, and I think he was worried by that Robinson into doing something dreadful."

"How dreadful?"

Joe Deering's curiosity was excited now by the housekeeper's manner, and he pressed her for further information.

"That Captain Robinson worried him to a skeleton, sir," she answered; "he was always here nag—nag—nagging night and day. At last my poor master bolted, sir."

"Bolted!"

"Ran away."

"Where to?"

"I don't know; but he bolted from here and from Captain Robinson."

"But Mr. Murray was surely not in fear of Captain Robinson."

"Indeed, he was. Captain Robinson knew something about my poor master that oughtn't to be known, so it was said, and he was always trying to force Mr. Murray to give him money."

"The deuce he was," said Captain Deering. "This throws a new light on the scoundrel and his cursed good-natured-looking figure-head."

"A deceitful beast!" said the housekeeper, warmly. "You would have thought that he couldn't hurt a worm to look at him, and yet I do believe that he's drove poor Mr. Murray to make away with himself."

"You don't think that?"

"What else can I think? He hasn't been seen or heard of for months and months. But if I wasn't so heavy at heart over that, sir, I could

laugh for joy to see that beast of a Captain Robinson's disappointment every time he comes."

"So he comes often?" said Joe Deering, eagerly.

"Every day; sometimes twice a day," was the reply.

Deering thought this information over quietly.

"Would you like to serve him out?" he asked, presently.

"Who?"

"Captain Robinson," responded Deering.

"That I should, indeed," said the housekeeper, eagerly; "only show me how to do it."

"I will."

Joe Deering did.

He made himself known to the woman, and convinced her that he had ample reason for wishing to repay the grudge.

And they plotted together to wreak a well-merited vengeance upon that falsely jovial Captain Robinson.

The nature of that vengeance you will learn if you have patience to wait till the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

HOW CAPTAIN ROBINSON CAME TO APPLY HIS LEECH AGAIN—WHAT CAME OF IT—THE SEA GIVES UP ITS DEAD—A FEARSOME SIGHT—THE TRAITOR'S TERROR—JOE DEERING WIPES OFF AN OLD SCORE.

CAPTAIN ROBINSON was more jovial than ever.

His honest-looking, ruddy face was beaming with smiles, and he appeared as hearty as the most honest, upright and plain-sailing fellow in the world.

Captain Robinson was like most sailors in one respect; he was remarkably superstitious.

Instinctive presage of good luck to-day put him in rare spirits, as he made his customary call.

"I feel as if I was going to land him to-day," muttered the jovial captain to himself.

And his face was actually beaming with smiles, as his hand rested on the knocker.

"Oh, good-morning, Mrs. Wilmot," he said, heartily; "how are you this bright morning, Mrs. Wilmot?"

"Better, thank you, Captain Robinson," returned the housekeeper, giving him an odd glance.

"That's hearty. Why, you are looking more yourself."

"Better in health, because better in spirits," said the housekeeper, insidiously.

The captain pricked up his ears at this.

"Any better news by chance, Mrs. Wilmot?" said he.

"Ah, that there is indeed," said she.

"About the master?" asked he.

"That's it," said she.

"You don't mean to say that he's coming home again?"

"I don't mean to say that he's coming," said the housekeeper, with wondrous significance.

"Why, whatever are you driving at?" he said.

"I'm not a-driving at nothing, Captain Robinson—leastways, not that I am aware of. All I know is, that Mr. Murray ain't likely to be coming home, for he ain't in a position to come home, seeing as—"

She paused.

"What?"

"Guess what."

"Hang it all, I can't."

"You must."

She laughed outright, and clapped her hands in regular kitten-like joy.

"What on earth do you mean, Mrs. Wilmot? I hate such palavering and beating about the bush. If he's coming home, say so; if he ain't coming home, tell me where I can see him, or where he's hiding."

"Why, he can't be coming home when—"

Here she stopped short in the most aggravating manner in the world.

The jovial captain grew black and threatening.

He was just going to burst out into a noisy fit of abusive language, when she stopped him short with a remark which quite startled him.

"There—there, what an impatient man you are, surely, Captain Robinson. Go up stairs and see for yourself why he ain't coming home."

The captain could only infer one thing from her words.

Murray was back.

Yes, he was not coming home, because he had already come.

This explained the housekeeper's joyous spirits, which seemed to bubble over in her.

"She's a nice old gal," said Robinson to himself, as he mounted the stairs, "and I'll stand her a trifle after I have applied my leech to her master again. Ha-ha!"

The jovial captain laughed at the quaint conceit.

He rarely enjoyed the prospect of once more gloating over the miserable Murray writhing under the moral pressure.

"I'll make him bleed handsome for keeping away so long," thought this jovial mariner. "I wonder how he'll enjoy the leech after such a long while?"

His hand rested upon the handle of the door.

What a startler it would be for Mr. Murray.

"I'll knock," thought the jovial Captain Robinson; "he'll think it's Mother Wilmot again. Such larks!"

He knocked.

"Come in."

How changed the voice sounded.

"He's caught cold," thought the practical joker.

He opened the door.

Closed it carefully behind him to guard against intrusion.

Then he turned and faced—Joe Deering!

* * * * *

Jovial Captain Robinson stood aghast.

The sight of his old friend literally petrified him.

Deering stood facing the jovial scoundrel, his hands leaning on the table.

Not a muscle of his face moved.

A cold, settled expression was in his eyes.

So fixed, so steady, that they might have been set in the head of a dead man.

The jovial Robinson was tongue-tied for a time.

* * * * *

"Joe!"

This monosyllable he faltered after a long while, and after a very big effort.

But Joe Deering said never a word in reply, nor did he move a muscle.

"Joe."

Deering stared at him with the same fixed, glassy eyes, until jovial Captain Robinson had a hideous idea flash across him.

Was it really a living man there?

He fastened a fixed, fascinating look upon the figure of the friend he had so villainously betrayed, and retreating a step, groped about behind him, for the handle of the door.

At last he got hold of it, and turned it.

"Stop!"

Deering had spoken, and with a jerk the jovial Captain Robinson turned around.

"Joe!" he gasped, again, "did you speak?"

Now Joe Deering saw by the traitor's pallid cheeks, and frightened look, what was passing in his mind.

So he was at no pains to destroy the illusion.

"I did. Your ears did not deceive you."

"I thought not," faltered Captain Robinson, plucking up in a faint degree, however.

"You marvel to see the ocean give up its dead," began Joe Deering, in a hollow voice.

Jovial Captain Robinson sank against the door for support, while a delicate green tint spread itself over his face.

We have said that he was a superstitious man.

This huge lump of humanity—nay, rather of inhumanity—was worse than a schoolgirl in point of courage.

The very word ghost frightened him, if he saw it in print.

He was sure that Joe Deering was dead.

Certain was he that Joe Deering had been decoyed into that floating coffin, and sent to a watery grave by himself.

Here, then, was the betrayed man's ghost come to reproach him with his crime.

The strong man turned heart-sick, and was like to faint.

Joe Deering looked at the fear-stricken traitor in silence.

He enjoyed his terror keenly indeed.

No feeling of pity at the abject terror of the wretched man crossed him.

For his thoughts went back to those fearful days and nights they passed on board the doomed *Albatross*.

Jovial Captain Robinson had been pitiless before, and the sufferings gone through in that terrible time had hardened Joe Deering's kind heart.

A genial, generous and soft-hearted fellow as a rule, he could not pardon this infamous wretch who had lured him into such a trap, even while professing the most affectionate friendship for him.

No!

This was Joe Deering's chance—his long-looked-for opportunity, and no weak emotion should spoil the revenge which he had waited for so patiently.

* * * * *

Jovial Captain Robinson essayed to speak.

In a faint, faltering voice, he managed to pronounce Joe Deering's name.

"Well, murderer!" returned Joe Deering; "what is it you want?"

"I want you to shake hands with me, Joe," responded the other, almost inaudibly.

"Assassin!"

"I—I—I don't mean you any harm," gasped jovial Captain Robinson.

"Liar!" thundered Joe Deering; "you dare make that statement, hovering as you do, between life and death!"

"No—no—no—no!" shrieked the jovial captain, "not that, Joe, not that."

"Yes, I say; for you are not long for this world."

"You are not sent to tell me that, Joe," said Robinson, his voice dying away in spite of a desperate effort to make it audible.

"I am."

"Ugh!"

And with a half groan, half grunt, he sank upon the ground prostrate.

Before his senses had fairly fled, Joe Deering strode over to him, and delivered him a heavy kick behind.

This brought him around in a wonderful way.

He knew that it was a material foot that had given that kick, and the conviction was a marvelous relief to him.

He scrambled up.

As he got to his feet, Joe Deering fixed him by the throat and shook him.

"You plotted to accomplish my murder," he said; "but now my turn's come, Robinson, and I mean to punish you."

Jovial Captain Robinson was a coward, an ar-rant cur, yet he infinitely preferred having to tackle flesh and blood, to battling with a ghost.

He turned upon his assailant.

But Deering was not to be denied.

Before the jovial captain could do anything to help himself, Joe Deering hammered his face into a jelly.

Half dazed, stunned, and blinded, Robinson fought it out, and struggling fiercely, he shook himself free.

And then he fled like a beaten cur from the house.

Joe Deering did not attempt to follow him.

"There," he said, calmly enough, considering what had gone before, "that's done. Thank goodness it's off my mind. Mr. Murray must have my next attention."

He little thought that the wretched shipowner had already paid the penalty of his crimes.

* * * * *

Jovial Captain Robinson was never the same man again.

Whether it was the physical or mental punishment he had had, we cannot possibly determine, but certain it is that something broke him up from that day, and he lingered on a miserable life of two years or more, and died in abject want.

CHAPTER XI.

A DOSE OF PALM OIL.

HAVING settled the hash of jovial Captain Robinson, we now proceed to the pleasant task of measuring out justice to others.

Messieurs Murray and Chivey are the persons we mean.

Those gentlemen having taken such excellent precautions to cut off young Jack Harkaway's communications with the outer world, fancied themselves tolerably safe.

Yet every now and then Murray's nerves were shaken as he thought of the vindictive Lenoir.

What has become of that dangerous individual?

The police had gone to the spot where Murray told them he had left the coiner senseless, and there they certainly found traces of a severe struggle, but Lenoir had disappeared.

The peasant also had done his duty as a French citizen by reporting the affair to the first gendarme he met on his road.

But though Marseilles was thoroughly searched, no trace of the man could be found, either in the town or the surrounding rural districts.

"There's one consolation, gov'nor," observed Chivey, "he won't dare show his ugly mug in

Marseilles any more, so you're safe enough here."

"He's desperate enough for anything."

"It's galleys for life if he's collared, and he knows it well enough."

"Galleys? ugh!"

And Herbert Murray gave a convulsive shudder, in which he was sympathetically joined by Chivey.

"Ain't it 'orrid to see them poor devils chained to the oars, and the h'overseer a walkin' up and down with his whip, a-lashin' 'em?" said Chivey.

"Tis, indeed."

Murray again paused and shuddered, but after a moment, he exclaimed:

"But it would be jolly, though, to see Harkaway and his friends at it."

"Crikey! and wouldn't I jest like to see that old beast of a Mole pulling away on his stumps. D'ye think they'll all get it?" asked Chivey.

"Yes, unless they manage to communicate with their friends or the consul."

"Then I had better just stroll up and see if our old pal the jailer has stepped any more letters."

"Yes, go by all means, for if we don't call for them, he's likely enough to give them up to —"

Murray hesitated, but Chivey instantly supplied the word.

"The rightful owners, you mean, guv'nor."

"Cut away!" sharply exclaimed Murray, who was annoyed at the liberties taken by his quondam servant.

Chivey strolled up towards the prison, and was just in time to meet the jailer coming out.

"Mornin', mossos," he said, with a familiar nod, "rather warm, ain't it? What d'ye say to a bottle of wine jest to wash the dust out o' yer throat?"

The Frenchman did not comprehend a fourth part of this speech, but he understood that he was to partake of a bottle of wine, and at once signified his willingness.

"Vid moosh plaisir, m'sieu."

And he led the way to a cabaret where they sold his favorite wine.

"Now, have you got any letters for me?" said Chivey, when they were comfortably seated at a table, remote from the few other customers, who were engaged in a very noisy game of dominoes.

"No understand," said the man, shaking his head.

"Any letters—billy duxes?"

The man made a gesture to indicate that he did not understand.

"Thick-headed old idiot," muttered Chivey; then calling in pantomime to aid his lack of French, he produced the first letter Jack had written to the consul.

"Letter, like this."

The jailer's eyes twinkled; he nodded and half drew from the beast pocket of his uniform the very document Chivey was so anxious to get hold of.

"Hand it over, old pal," he said, holding out his hand.

The jailer smiled as he again concealed the letter.

Then he in turn held out his hand, and made signs that he required something to be dropped into it.

"Old cormorant wants more palm-oil," muttered Chivey, and most reluctantly he drew from his pocket one of the gold pieces Herbert Murray had given him for the purpose of bribing the jailer.

But the Frenchman shook his head.

"Two; I cannot part with the letter under two," he said, in much better English than he had hitherto spoken.

"Well, I'm blest. Why couldn't you speak like that before? We'd have come to business much sooner."

"I thought monsieur would like to exhibit his extensive knowledge of the French tongue; but here is the letter."

"And here's the coin. I will buy as many as you can get at the same figure."

"You shall certainly have the first chance."

Chivey helped himself to another glass, and asked:

"When is the trial to be?"

"The judge, unfortunately, has been taken ill, and the prisoners will have to wait about three weeks for an opportunity of proving their innocence."

"That's unfortunate. What do you think they'll get?"

"If found guilty, twenty years at the galleys."

"What, old wooden legs and all?"

"The gentleman who has lost his limbs will be probably sent to some other employment."

"What a pity. Well, good-by, old cock; keep your weather-eye open."

"*Au revoir, monsieur.*"

Cocking his hat very much on one side, Chivey stalked out of the place.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE PURLOINED LETTER WAS LOST—AND WHO FOUND IT.

"THAT 'ere frog-eating swine gets two quid for bonin' the letter, so I think I'm entitled to one. Can't let all the coin go into old Frenchy's pocket."

Thus Chivey muttered to himself as he neared the place where he and Herbert Murray were staying.

Chivey evidently intended putting the screw on Herbert.

"Look here, guv'nor," said he, as he entered the room, "I ain't much of a reading cove, but I see once a book called Jessop's Fables."

"Æsop's Fables, I presume you mean, Chivey?"

"It's all the same. But there's a yarn about a monkey what made the cat pull chestnuts out of the fire; and I'm jiggered if I'm going to play the cat."

"I am not aware that any one wishes you to do so," responded Murray, in his blandest manner.

"Well, you are a-trying it on, at any rate."

"How so?"

"Why, supposing it's found out about our stopping these here letters."

"Which letters, Chivey?"

"The one I've got in my pocket, and——"

"Oh, you've got one, then. Hand it over, please, Chivey."

"Not so fast, guv'nor. You jest listen to what I've got to say first."

"I am all attention."

"Well, supposing this game was found out, who do you think would get into trouble?"

"Why, you would, undoubtedly; and your friend the French jailer."

"And don't you think it's worth your while to come down very handsome, considering the risk I run?"

"It does not strike me in that light; but I do think it would be a good plan for you to get rid of the stolen letter as soon as possible; for if anything is found out, and the jailer says he gave you the letters, it is not likely that his word—the word of a man who acknowledges himself a thief—will be taken against yours, unless the documents are found in your possession."

"That's all very well."

"Then if it's all very well just hand over the letter."

And Murray held out his hand.

Chivey very reluctantly passed over the letter, muttering as he did so:

"Well, I'm blest if I don't think you would whistle a blackbird off the nest while you stole the eggs."

Herbert Murray took no notice of this speech; he was too deeply engrossed with the letter, which he found read as follows:

"TO HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S CONSUL AT MARSEILLES:

"SIR—I have already addressed several letters to you on the subject of the incarceration of myself and friends in the prison of Marseilles, on a charge of counterfeit coining. I also explained how we were led, by the artful devices of a person calling himself Markby, to be actually in the coiner's house when the police entered it, and, therefore, appearances are certainly against us. To all these letters you have made no reply, which I think is certainly hard, and not quite right, as I imagine the duty of a British consul includes looking after the interests of British subjects in the town or district he is stationed at."

"Now, sir, in my former letters I requested you to communicate with the bankers in this town, and also with my father, whose address I give below, and who placed money in their hands for my use. If you will do so, you will see that all the statements in my former letters are correct; but if you do not, a number of British subjects will probably be condemned and heavily sentenced, entirely through your neglect."

"Therefore, I beg of you at once to communicate with those who can identify me and my friends, and in the meantime to use your influence to postpone the trial till that communication can be effected."

"Your obedient servant,

"J. HARKAWAY, JR."

"My eye!" said Chivey, when Murray had read the letter aloud, "ain't he getting his back up?"

"No matter. They are all of them safe enough, and if they get out, I'll forgive them."

"But they won't forgive you."

"Perhaps not; but ring the bell, Chivey. We'll have some wine after this, and just hand over the segar-box."

The ex-groom gave a tug at the bell-rope and ordered wine.

Then he took up a segar-box, and, giving it a vigorous shake, ejaculated:

"There ain't a blessed smoke in it, guv'nor."

"Well, I'll just put on my hat and stroll up to the shop of Monsieur Cretineau-Joly and order a fresh stock. I must have a few minutes' exercise before it gets dark; sha'n't be ten minutes."

Herbert left the apartment, while Chivey muttered:

"He's afraid of meeting that Lenoir if he goes out after dark."

And Chivey was quite right.

Herbert Murray walked briskly up the street till he reached the tobacconist's, where he paused a moment, to look at the numerous varieties of the nicotian herb displayed in the window, along with pipes and segar tubes of every shape and pattern.

As he looked, several others looked, and one of the lookers, while removing his pipe, was so unfortunate as to allow some of the tobacco ash to blow in Murray's face.

"Curse you for an awkward Frenchman," growled Murray, while the other politely apologized for the mishap.

Herbert coughed, and sneezed, and drew out his handkerchief; but neither he nor any one else noticed that at the same time he drew out young Jack Harkaway's letter, which fluttered slowly to the pavement, where it lay with the address downwards.

Murray bought his box of segars, and returned to the hotel where he resided, but still the letter lay unheeded beneath the tobacco shop window, till darkness had settled over the town of Marseilles except where street lamps and shop lights pierced the glow.

Then there came up to the shop an old man, who apparently had been a soldier, as he dragged one leg very stiffly, and had his left arm in a sling.

But although his hair was white his carriage was upright and martial.

He looked in at the door, then entered, and purchased some tobacco, after which he stood outside and filled his pipe.

"I might have taken a light inside," he muttered, when that operation was finished, and seeing a scrap of paper on the pavement, he picked it up, to use as a pipe light.

But the writing on the outside caught his eye.

"A letter to the British consul!" the old man ejaculated; "it may be worth a franc or two, if I restore it to his excellency."

So he thrust it into his pocket, obtained a light, and hobbled away in the direction of the consulate.

But presently he paused in a retired spot, where only a single lamp illuminated the surrounding houses.

"I wonder what the letter is about?" he said, "I can make a better bargain, perhaps, if I know the contents."

And without more ado the man pulled out the letter, and read it carefully.

Although it was written in English, the old French soldier seemed to understand it thoroughly.

"That cursed villain's name again!" he hissed, through his teeth, when he had read a few lines. "But I'll pay him yet!"

Then he continued the perusal, steadily, till he came to the end.

"It looks like truth," he said, as he returned it to his pocket. "I will restore it to the consul. Ha—ha! It will be sport indeed if I, Pierre Lenoir, the proscribed criminal, can defeat the schemes of that villain."

With a subdued chuckle the coiner departed on his way, revelling with delight at the thought that he would yet be avenged on his perfidious friend.

He reached the consul's residence, knocked, and was admitted by the same servant who had formerly opened the door to Chivey.

"Is his excellency the consul at home?"

"Yes, but werry much engaged," replied the flunkey.

"I do not particularly wish to see him, but I have found this letter in the street, and it may be something of importance."

"Right, my good feller; 'ere's a franc for you."

And the door was closed on Lenoir, who hastened away.

* * * * *

Two hours later the governor of the jail and the consul were engaged in an important conversation.

But their plans must, for the present, remain a secret; nor did Jack and his imprisoned friends know that their last letter had produced a better effect than the first.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SORROWFUL HOUSEHOLD—NEWS AT LAST.

CHANGE we the scene to England, and to that particular part of the island where old Jack and his friends were living.

Though surrounded by every luxury that money could procure, they were not happy.

"No news yet?" was the first question that Mrs. Harkaway would ask her husband in the morning, and he, with a shake of the head, would respond:

"None yet, my dear, but do not despond."

But the fond mother vainly endeavored to hope against hope.

Little Emily, too, went about in a most listless, melancholy manner, wondering why it was that Jack did not write, and Paquita, too, was quite despondent at not hearing anything of Harry Girdwood.

Dick Harvey did all he could to cheer up everybody, but it was a hard task, for he was working against his own convictions, which were that the youngsters had got into some trouble from which they were unable to extricate themselves.

Letters had been written to young Jack at Marseilles, but these had never reached him, having fallen into the hands of Herbert Murray, who had applied at the post office, in the name of Harkaway, for them.

Paquita and little Emily, though still firm friends, were not in each other's society so much as formerly, as they both preferred to endure their sorrows in solitude.

Paquita, in particular, was fond of a sequestered nook in the grounds, where, half hidden by shrubs, she could command a view of the long, straight road leading from the nearest railway station.

She had a notion that she would be the first one to see the absentees, and had chosen that as a place of observation, where she would sit for hours watching and trying to hope.

Harvey found out the retreat, and employed the photographer who took Emily's portrait, to give him a good likeness of the southern beauty.

Paquita knew nothing of this, so absorbed was she in her own meditations, till a few days afterwards Uncle Dick, as she had learned to call him, gave her some copies of it.

She thanked him, and hurrying off to her own room, enclosed one in an envelope, which she addressed to Harry. There was no letter with it, but underneath the portrait she wrote:

"With Paquita's dearest love. As she waits for one who comes not."

This she posted herself, registering it for extra safety.

* * * * *

Still came no tidings, as day after day passed, till one morning the postman brought a large, official-looking letter, addressed in a strange handwriting, and bearing foreign postmarks.

Despite all his hardihood, Harkaway's hand trembled as he took it up, and, eager as he was for news, it was some seconds before he could nerve himself to break the seal.

His wife sat watching with breathless expectation, feeling convinced that at length there was news.

"Are they safe?" she asked, when she had followed her husband's eye to the conclusion of the lengthy epistle.

"They are safe for the present."

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed, giving way to woman's great relief—tears.

"But where are they?" she continued, a minute afterwards.

"At Marseilles, where they have been for some time, so the British consul tells me, and where they are likely to be till we go to release them."

"Release them! What do you mean? Don't keep back anything from me, dear husband."

"Well, if you must know the worst, they are in prison, on a charge of coining."

"What an infamous charge to make against them!" exclaimed a couple of indignant feminine voices, belonging to little Emily and Paquita, who had just come into the room.

"Husband, you don't believe our boy to be guilty of such a crime?"

"No; but—"

"But what?"

"Appearances are very much against them, the consul says. The great thing is to establish their identity, as the boy is supposed to have assumed the name he bears."

At this moment Harvey appeared, and the news was instantly imparted to him.

"It was a very serious affair, and it is certain we must go at once. But really it is ridiculous to fancy old Mole and those black rascals accused of coining."

"It will not be ridiculous if they are condemned and sent to the galleys, pa," said little Emily.

"True, little girl, therefore we will see about starting at once. You see about packing my things, while I run up to town to get passports for the lot of us."

"Passports are not required for traveling," said Emily.

"Certainly not for traveling; but what can establish our identity better than passports signed by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs?"

There was no answering this question; so Dick started off to London, while the rest busied themselves with preparations for a Continental trip.

Within forty-eight hours they were crossing the Channel; six hours later they had entered Paris, where they took a brief rest, and then continued their journey toward Marseilles.

For just as they were starting, Harkaway received a telegram from the consul at Marseilles: "Come as soon as you possibly can, or you may be too late."

Need it be said that after such a message, they lost no time in speeding to their destination?

CHAPTER XIV.

MONSIEUR HOCQUART CLERMONT DELAMARRE—THE COINER AT HOME.

BUT what had the consul and the governor of the jail been doing all the time?

When the consul first called upon the governor of the jail, that official tried to laugh off the matter.

"Surely," said the governor, "you don't believe the tale these young fellows tell?"

"I am more than half inclined to do so, if only from the fact that the writer of this appears to have written several other letters which have miscarried. But why, may I ask, was I not informed that some of my countrymen had been arrested?"

"Well, my dear sir, their story seemed to me so absurd, that I did not think it worth while to trouble you."

"But they asked to see me."

"True."

"And I fear as you did not forward their request, I shall be obliged to mention your name to our ambassador in Paris."

"For Heaven's sake do not! If such a thing were known to the minister of justice, I should lose my situation at once."

"Then if I am silent on this matter, you must render me every assistance in finding out the truth about these prisoners."

"Willingly. What can I do?"

"I should like to see the youth who calls himself Harkaway; but first of all, where is the jailer who usually has charge of these prisoners?"

"Gone to his home, monsieur. The ordinary officials are, as you are doubtless aware, replaced by a military guard, between sunset and sunrise."

"Good; then oblige me by bringing him here."

So young Jack was brought into the presence of the consul, who closely questioned him as to what he had been doing in Marseilles.

He told the truth, and in spite of the severe cross-examination by the governor and consul, stuck to his tale.

"Humph!" said the consul. "You are consistent, at all events. Well, for the present, you may return to your cell, but don't tell even your friends that you have seen the British consul."

"I won't mention it, sir."

And Jack returned to his cell, escorted by the governor himself, as the consul did not wish anyone to know of the interview.

But when the governor returned, the consul said:

"Now, Monsieur Hocquart Delamarre, what do you think of the affair?"

The governor did not reply, but there quietly glided from behind a screen, which probably had

concealed him during the interview, a man of middle age and height, with nothing at all striking in his appearance.

He might have passed for a clerk, a second-rate shopkeeper, or a superior artisan; anyone passing him in the street would have taken no notice whatever of such an everyday kind of a man.

Yet, after all, a very close observer would have noticed something very peculiar about him. His eyes!

One moment they seemed to pierce the inmost recesses of your very soul, yet when you tried, through them, to find a clew to their owner's thoughts, you were utterly defeated, for they became misty and expressionless.

"What do I think of the affair, monsieur?"

"Yes."

"Well, so early in the case, it is difficult to pronounce a decided opinion," said Delamarre.

"That is very true, Monsieur Delamarre," said the consul.

"But as your excellency has sought my professional assistance in this case, I feel my reputation is at stake, and shall exert myself to the utmost."

"Monsieur Delamarre is one of the cleverest gentlemen we have in this line of business," said the governor.

The middle-aged gentleman bowed.

"You are kind enough to say so, sir."

"You have made a good selection, Monsieur le Consul. In the detective police Monsieur Delamarre has few equals."

Again the detective bowed, and addressing the consul, said:

"When shall I next have the honor of waiting on you again, monsieur?"

"As soon as you have learned anything you think of sufficient importance to tell me."

"At the consulate, of course?"

"Will it be safe for you to be seen there?"

"Monsieur, I stake my professional reputation that, when I call on you, you shall not recognize me till I choose to reveal myself. There is an extremely artful person mixed up in this affair, but I shall prove still more artful than any of them; take the word of Hocquart Clermont Delamarre."

With another bow the French detective made his exit.

He proceeded in the first place to his own temporary residence, where he made a considerable alteration in his personal appearance.

Then making straight for the quarter of the city mostly inhabited by the respectable working classes, he made a friendly call on Pierre Lenoir, the coiner, who, as it will be remembered, the police had been unable to trace since his encounter with Herbert Murray and the waggoner.

A friendly call we have termed it, and so it seemed at first, for the detective and the criminal shook hands in the most friendly manner.

"Halloo, friend Clermont!" exclaimed Lenoir, "what brings you from Paris?"

"Why, it was too hot for me there."

There was a pause.

"And you, too," continued the detective. "I have heard your name mentioned very much of late. How did that affair happen?"

Pierre Lenoir told his friend, whom of course he did not know as a detective, but merely as an associate with coiners and such like people, how he had been tricked by Markby.

"But I'll have his life, though!"

"Doubtless. It will be a bad day for him when he falls into your hands."

Lenoir growled a fierce oath.

"He has escaped me for the present, but if I wait for years, I will have my revenge; Pierre Lenoir never forgives!"

Unheeding of the coiner's anger, the detective stroked his mustache, and continued:

"But how about the prisoners up at the jail yonder?"

"They are innocent."

"Innocent!"

"Undoubtedly."

"Then why are they in prison?"

"Because the only persons who can clear them are Markby and myself."

"Ah, I see!"

"And Markby for some reason or other won't clear them."

"Some old grudge, I suppose."

"Yes. However, they are innocent; when I tried them, they flatly refused to have anything to do with the game."

"Well, they are in a nice fix; but how did you manage to escape after that little affair with Markby and the peasant?"

"Crawled into a bush as near as possible to the scene of the fight."

"Ah!"

"If I had gone half a mile away, the police would no doubt have found me, but the thick-headed rascals never thought of looking only half a dozen yards off. Ha—ha—ha!"

The detective smiled grimly.

"They are thick-headed rascals."

And after a pause occupied in listening to sounds in the streets, he repeated:

"And the English prisoners are entirely innocent then?"

"Entirely."

"Now listen to me, Pierre Lenoir," continued the detective, rapping the table smartly as though to command attention. "But what a curious echo you have in this old room."

"I had not noticed it; but to continue."

"These English refused to have anything to do with your business, you say?"

"Yes; and showed fight when I would have used force to detain them."

"Then if the judge knows that, the young fellows will be released?"

"Yes; but, my dear friend, it is not likely I shall go the court to give evidence in their favor."

"You will."

"Nonsense."

"I shall take you there."

There was something in his visitor's manner that made Lenoir first start from his seat and make a hasty movement towards the table.

But he recoiled when Hocquart Clermont Delamarre thrust a revolver in his face and exclaimed:

"If you make another movement towards that drawer where your pistols are, I will send a bullet through you. Keep your hands down by your side."

"What in the fiend's name does this mean?" gasped the coiner.

"It means that you are my prisoner."

"Prisoner!"

"Yes."

"Then who are you?"

"You have known me as Clermont, but my real name is Delamarre."

"The detective?"

"The same."

The coiner gave a hasty look around the apartment, and then made a step towards the door.

But it instantly opened, and there appeared a police officer in uniform, who said:

"If you attempt to pass this door, you are a dead man."

The window!

It was not very high above the roadway, and one bold leap might yet bring liberty.

But, as if reading his very thought, Delamarre gave one of those peculiar raps on the table, which was again echoed from without, and instantly the figure of a policeman armed with a revolver was seen filling the casement.

The chimney.

That he knew was crossed by strong bars. No exit that way.

"Sit down, Pierre Lenoir."

The detective was provokingly cool, and the coiner gnashed his teeth with rage.

"Sit down, man; why, you ought to feel proud at being taken so neatly."

"Curse you!"

"Never mind. I have the finest and easiest pair of wristbands any gentlemen in your line of business ever wore. Let me try them on."

Lenoir for a moment contemplated resistance, but two revolvers were close to his head, so second thoughts prevailed.

He was firmly handcuffed.

"Now, Pierre," said the detective, "listen to me and I will quickly prove that I am a far better friend than you think me."

The coiner smiled a bitter smile.

"Of course it doesn't look so; but listen."

"I am compelled to," replied Lenoir.

"You can clear these English prisoners."

"If I choose to speak."

"If you choose to speak, the English consul will exert all his influence to procure a mitigation of your sentence, whatever it may be."

Lenoir nodded.

"But if you do not, why, the whole force of the British Embassy will be exerted against you; so I fancy your choice will soon be made."

Lenoir sat silent for some minutes.

"Have you made up your mind?" asked the detective at length.

"I don't see why I should speak; they belong to the same cursed country as that Markby."

"Well, don't you see how nicely things come around? You clear the prisoners, and by so doing incriminate Markby, alias Murray."

"Ay; but where is he?"

"In Marseilles. I am only waiting for a little more evidence before I lay my hands on him. He is a slippery customer, and it won't do to arrest him until the case is complete."

"Then, curse him, I'll tell all—nay, more; if you look in that drawer, where the pistols are, you know, you will find a note from him to me. That will be quite as good evidence as my word."

"Good, Lenoir. I can't promise you a free pardon, but I fancy you will get off lightly."

"I hope I may be sent to the same galley as Murray, alias Markby, has to serve; and if I am only chained to the same oar I shall be happy."

"Why?"

"I will find an early opportunity, and then I will kill him."

"No, Lenoir; that will not be the way to shorten your sentence."

"I'll kill him."

"No; lead him a life of misery and dread while he is chained to the oar. What you do when you are both released is a matter I have no present concern with."

"March, then; let us be going."

And the coiner walked gaily away, his anger at being captured having been replaced by joy at the hopes of avenging himself on the treacherous Markby, alias Murray.

Hocquart Clermont Delamarre himself walked arm-in-arm with the coiner, and the good people of Marseilles knew not that he had been taken.

Even in the jail he was entered under an assumed name.

The jailer, who had been in attendance on the English party, could not understand why his prisoners wrote no more letters to the English consul or their relatives in England, and Herbert Murray almost suspected the truth when he chanced, the day after losing the letter, to look for it.

But Chivey reassured him.

"I went all over your clothes and my own this morning afore you was up, guv'nor, and burnt every one of the letters I could find."

"What for?" demanded Murray.

"In case of accidents. It would not do us any good to have them things found on us; and nobody ever knows what is going to turn up."

CHAPTER XV.

THE ESCORT—THE TRIAL.

"MARSEILLES at last!" exclaimed Dick Harvey, as the train came to a standstill.

"I thought we were never to end our journey," said little Emily.

However, they quickly got clear of the railway station, engaged apartments at an hotel, and then, without waiting to eat or drink, made their way towards the jail.

"I wonder what house that is with the Union Jack flying over it," said Mrs. Harkaway, as they passed along a street near the harbor.

"The British consulate, very likely," said her husband. "We had better call there."

But the consul was not at home.

"Do you know where he is gone?" asked Harvey of the servant.

"Why, sir, there are some Englishmen to be tried to-day for coining, and he is gone to watch the case."

"To-day?"

"Yes, sir; in fact, the trial will commence in ten minutes," replied the man, after consulting his watch.

"Where does the trial take place?"

"The second turning on the left, sir. The hall of justice is a large building just around the corner."

"Come along, then," said Harkaway; "there is no time to lose."

They hurried along the street at a rate that made the French people stare.

Paquita was the first of the party to turn the corner, and she had no sooner done so than she exclaimed:

"There they are."

And running between a file of soldiers, threw her arms around Harry Girdwood's neck.

Little Emily would have followed her example, but the officer in charge of the escort would not permit any such irregular conduct, and Paquita was compelled to rejoin her friends.

"Hurrah, dad!" exclaimed young Jack; "I knew you would turn up in time. And, mama, how pale you are looking."

"Can you wonder at it, my boy, considering the anxiety we have all suffered?"

"Mr. Mole—Mr. Mole," exclaimed Dick Harvey, shaking his head. "I am surprised indeed

to hear that you have taken to counterfeit coining."

"Harvey, this is really no joking matter," replied Mole.

"No, it will be no joke when you are chained to the oar in one of those galleys down in the harbor."

"Stand back, ladies and gentlemen, if you please," exclaimed the officer commanding the escort. "I cannot allow any communication with my prisoners."

So they were obliged to keep at a distance.

At that moment a portly, elderly gentleman, who had been watching the scene, came up, saying:

"Have I the honor of addressing Mr. Harkaway?"

"That is my name, sir."

"I am the English consul."

Our old hero at once seized him by the hand, saying:

"Sir, words are powerless to express how grateful I am for your interference on behalf of my boy."

"Don't mention it, sir, I only did as I am instructed to do in all such cases."

"But about the trial; what chance does that young scapegrace stand?"

"There is very little doubt that he will be acquitted, as we have the best of evidence in his favor. But come along, let us get into court."

The consul led the way into the hall of justice, and placed the Harkaway party among the audience in such a position that they could see all that was going on, without being conspicuous themselves.

Then they waited patiently till the judge arrived.

While our young hero's father and friends were thus entering Marseilles, two people were trying to leave the city.

These were Herbert Murray and his friend Chivey.

"There ain't no use in stoppin' 'ere, guv'nor," the latter had said. "We can see by the papers what they gets."

"You are right, Chivey; we will get away for a time."

"We can come back an' see 'em when they are fairly fixed, you know."

"Well, pack up, and we'll just take a trip to Paris for a week."

Their portmanteaus were quickly got ready, and a vehicle was engaged to take them to the railway station.

But when they alighted, and were about to take their tickets, a very polite police officer tapped Murray on the shoulder, and said:

"I much regret to have to ask monsieur to postpone his journey."

"What?"

"I must request monsieur to defer his visit to Paris till after the trial of the English coiners."

"What has that to do with me?"

"The judge may desire your presence, monsieur; he may wish to hear your evidence."

"Nonsense!"

"It may be; but I am compelled to say that I cannot permit you to leave Marseilles to-day, and I must request you to accompany me back to the hall of justice."

"We are prisoners, then?"

"By no means. Only the law requires your presence, and the law, you know, must be obeyed, monsieur!"

Chivey had not taken part in the conversation, but had been looking around for a good chance of escaping.

"You, of course, will accompany your friend?" said the detective, tapping him on the shoulder.

"Must, I suppose," responded Chivey, who noticed several other policemen were loitering about the station.

So, with a very bad grace, the two intending excursionists walked back to the hall of justice. The English prisoners had already been brought into the hall, and the trial had commenced.

It certainly seemed at first that our young heroes had got themselves in a bad fix, for the evidence was much against them.

The police had captured them in Lenoir's workshop.

They had been seen in conversation with him not only there, but at the cafe the police had been warned of their nefarious doings and so forth.

"Have you any witnesses to call, prisoner?" asked the judge, addressing young Jack.

"Yes, Monsieur le Juge; and the first of them is Pierre Lenoir. Let him be called."

"What folly is this?" demanded the judge, sternly.

"I ask that Pierre Lenoir shall be summoned

to give evidence," repeated young Jack, who had been told by Delamarre what line of defense to adopt.

"Do you think he will respond if called?"

"If he does not respond, I shall derive no benefit from his evidence."

"Let Pierre Lenoir be called," said the judge, rather angrily.

And Perrie Lenoir was called by an officer of the court.

"Here!"

The answer was clear and distinct.

And the next moment Pierre Lenoir, escorted by two gendarmes, marched into the court-room.

Chivey touched Murray on the arm, and both had an idea of sneaking away.

But the polite and attentive officer who had brought them back from the railway, stood in the doorway, and was evidently watching them.

In fact, he spoke to them.

"Things are getting interesting, gentlemen," said he; "it was worth losing a train to see such a dramatic trial as this promises to be."

"Interferes with our business, rather."

"Not so much, monsieur. But hush!"

The evidence of Pierre Lenoir was then taken. The public prosecutor objected at first to his evidence; but it was urged by the counsel for the defense that although accused of many offenses, he was at present convicted of none, and therefore was entitled to full credence.

"Your name is Pierre Lenoir?" asked Jack's counsel.

"It is."

"Do you know the prisoners?"

"But slightly."

"Say when you met them."

"I met them at my own house were they came by invitation to see some specimens of my skill as a medal engraver."

"Did those Englishmen assist you in any way to pass counterfeit coin?"

"Neither of those Englishmen; but that man did."

And turning around, he pointed at the wretched Murray, *alias* Markby.

And at the same time the affable police officer drew nearer, smiling more blandly than ever.

"'Tis false!" shrieked the wretched Murray.

"The public must maintain silence in the court," said the judge.

"It's a base lie!" exclaimed Murray.

"The officers of the court will arrest the disorderly person."

The smiling gendarme at once swooped down on his prey.

"That man," continued Lenoir, "not only passed bad money for me, but he persuaded me that the prisoners would do so also. But when I introduced myself and tried to get them to join me, they absolutely refused."

The public prosecutor tried in vain to shake his story, but he positively adhered to every word he had spoken.

Then Harkaway senior was called upon, and he in conjunction with the banker proved that there was no need whatever for the prisoners to commit such an offense, as by simply signing his name young Jack could draw far more francs than the judge's yearly salary amounted to.

The counsel for the defense, then challenged the prosecution to produce any evidence that the prisoners had passed bad money, and the public prosecutor was obliged to confess that he could not do so.

Whereupon the judge remarked that the prosecution had utterly failed, and directed the prisoners to be discharged.

But Lenoir and Murray were directed to be kept in separate cells till they could be tried, and Chivey was ordered like accommodation.

And having now plenty of time for reflection, Herbert Murray sat with irons on his arms and legs, thinking dolefully over the past, and thinking whether, after all, honesty would not have proved the best policy.

CHAPTER XVI.

A LAST VIEW OF MURRAY AND CHIVEY.

"HURRAH, dad!"

"Hurrah, my boy! Now, then, one and all. Hip—hip—hip—"

"Hurrah!"

The peal that burst from the throats of the reunited English party fairly astonished the assembled crowd of citizens who were flocking out of the hall of justice.

And then such a shaking of hands and kissing.

The latter form of insanity at length became infectious, and the two black imps Tinker and Bogey insisted on pressing a chaste salute on Mr.

Mole's coy lips, to the intense amusement of the bystanders.

"Get out, you black devils!" exclaimed he.

"Why, Massa Mole, we been good friends dis long time in dat 'ere old prison; you isn't a gwine to turn around on de poor niggahs now we's got out."

"Get away! Never mind, don't get away; I'm not proud—hurrah!"

In his excitement, Mr. Mole threw his battered hat a great height into the air, but slipping while so doing, he sat down upon the pavement rather violently.

"Sac-r-r-re! seize that old villain!"

The indignant command came from a mounted officer in charge of a considerable body of soldiers.

While directing the movements of his men, drawn sword in hand, down came Mole's *chapeau* on the point of the deadly weapon, which went through the crown, and the lining getting entangled with the hilt, it could not be very readily removed.

And, of course, the French spectators at once began laughing, to see the rather absurd situation of the officer.

Mole would certainly have been dragged off again, had not the British consul once more interposed.

"Monsieur le Colonel, I hasten to assure you that it was an accident," he said.

"I will not be insulted by accident; arrest him!"

"But consider, sir, you have no crime to urge against him."

"Bah, what care I?"

"He will apologize."

"Of course he will," said Harvey, thinking it time to interpose. "Here, where are you, Mr. Mole?"

"Down here, sitting on the other end of me," responded the ex-tutor, in very doleful accents.

"An apology!" said the excited officer, who had dismounted, and was brandishing his weapon, as though about to sacrifice Mole.

But poor Mole seemed altogether too confused to say the soothing words required, so the consul again interfered.

"Really, Monsieur le Colonel, this poor gentleman seems to have sustained some severe injury. You will see he has lost both his legs in a series of heroic actions, the particulars of which I have not time to give you, but accept my assurance that the affair of the hat was entirely an accident."

"Lost legs in action! Ah, then it becomes my duty to apologize for the hasty language I have used to a brave soldier."

As things were changing a little, Mole thought it time to become conscious, and with the aid of Tinker and Bogey, he struggled to his feet.

"Monsieur," continued the officer, "I withdraw my words."

"Enough said, my dear sir," responded Mole; "let the matter drop, I pray."

The officer gave a military salute, restored the perforated hat to its owner, and rejoined his men.

"Really imprisonment seems to have no effect on you, Mr. Mole," said Harvey; "you begin your old pranks the moment you are released."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you pass yourself off as an old soldier."

"No, it was our good friend the consul."

"Well, you allowed the colonel to deceive himself."

"It's all the result of my really martial aspect, my dear boy."

And Mole hobbled on, trying to sustain his military appearance.

* * * * *

Our friends did not at once leave Marseilles.

They were informed that perhaps they might be required to give evidence against Murray, so they took up their residence in the best hotel of the place and waited, the elders of the party being perfectly content now that the youngsters had regained their liberty.

However, as events turned out, they were not called upon to attend the trial of the shipowner's son, as Monsieur Hocquart Clermont Delamarre and his assistants managed to pile up quite sufficient proof to convince the judge of Herbert Murray's guilt.

He, Lenoir, and Chivey, who certainly was not so deeply involved as his master, were sentenced to serve ten years each in the galleys.

Lenoir's original sentence was fifteen years, but the promised intercession of the consul was effectual in shortening it to ten.

There was, however, another trial, at which young Jack and Harry Girdwood were request-

ed to attend, and the prisoner in this case was the jailer to whom they had entrusted their letters to the consul.

He being clearly convicted of receiving bribes from prisoners, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and so retires from the scene.

Young Jack, his parents, Harry Girdwood, Harvey, little Emily, and Paquita were taking a walk in the neighborhood of the harbor one morning, when they became aware of a very dismal-looking procession coming down the road from the prison.

First of all came half a dozen soldiers, trailing their rifles, which were evidently loaded and ready for instant use.

Then, in single file, about a yard behind each other, and every man with his right leg attached by a ring to a long chain that extended the entire length of the party, came ten men clad in garments of very coarse serge, and with closely-cropped heads.

The instant he saw them in the distance, young Jack guessed what it meant, and pointed the gang out to the others.

"Let us get away if we can," said he.

"Why?" asked Harvey.

"Because it will look as though we came here simply to gloat over their disgrace," replied Jack.

"Right, my boy."

But there was no way of avoiding them, as there was no turning out of the street, and all the house doors were closed, so they were compelled to see all.

First of all came seven of the lowest-looking ruffians in creation, villains whose countenances were expressive of nothing but brutality and vice; the eighth was Chivey, whose cheeks bore traces of tears, and the ninth was Pierre Lenoir, who walked erect and proud as Lucifer, except when he made a half turn about as though he would like to strangle Herbert Murray, who walked with tottering steps at the end of the chain.

"Poor fellows!" said Mrs. Harkaway.

"They deserve it," exclaimed her husband and Harvey, simultaneously. "They tried to get our boys the very punishment that has overtaken them."

Our friends, however, had seen enough, and did not care to witness what followed.

If they had gone inside the harbor gates, they might have seen three or four very long sharp-bowed vessels moored to the quay or lying at anchor a little way out.

Neither mast nor sail had these vessels, but from each side projected a dozen or more of gigantic oars, larger than those used by Thames bargemen.

Had they gone down to the harbor, they would presently have seen them chained up, two of them to each oar, but with their feet so far at liberty that they could move backwards and forwards three paces.

Then they would have heard the word of command given, and would have seen the poor slaves tugging away at the oars till the huge craft was sweeping rapidly out to sea, while the galley-master, walking up and down between the two rows of oarsmen, gave blows of his whip on the right hand or the left when he saw a man flagging, or an oar that did not swing in unison with the rest.

Such was the fate to which the career of crime had brought the son of the once respected shipowner Murray.

Slavery from morn till night, beneath the broiling sun, or exposed to cold, rain and hail, the coarsest of black bread and lentil pottage, formed his scanty meal; his associates the lowest type of humanity.

And even over and above such a hard lot there fell upon his heart the craven fear some day that Lenoir, who was chained to the next oar, would break loose and kill him.

Many would have preferred death to such slavery, but Herbert Murray feared to die.

"Halloo, Englishman! faster!" the galley-master would shout. And then his whip or cane would sharply visit poor Murray's shoulders.

And the chuckling voice of Lenoir would be heard, exclaiming:

"Ah, traitor! this is nothing to what you will suffer when I have my chance for revenge."

CHAPTER XVII.

TERRIBLE RAILWAY ACCIDENT.

THREE days after Murray and Chivey embarked on their dreary voyage, the Harkaway party quitted Marseilles.

The waiter and the diver, so long young Jack's

companions in adventure, preferred remaining at Marseilles.

They had no home ties, and had so long been accustomed to a wandering Continental life, that they had no great desire to settle down quietly in England.

However, Harkaway, senior, made them a handsome present each, and he also presented Monsieur Hocquart Clermont Delamarre with a very substantial proof of his esteem and gratitude, and the detective was further gratified by receiving from the two young ladies, Paquita and Emily, a handsomely-mounted *carte de visite* portrait.

"And now for home!" exclaimed our young hero.

"You will be sorry when you get there, won't you?" said Emily.

"No, dear; why should I be?"

"Because in England you can't go on as you have been doing, running away with fair Circass—"

There was nobody looking, so Jack took the liberty of cutting the reproach short with a kiss.

"You must not say anything more about that, Emily; and after all, I don't think you would have approved of my leaving her to the mercy of those Turks."

"That I should not, Jack."

The youth then handed his young sweetheart into one of the vehicles in waiting, and off they started for the railway, where they found they had to wait ten minutes.

To occupy the time they strolled up and down the platform.

Suddenly Harry Girdwood exclaimed:

"Why, where is Mr. Mole? Did he come in your carriage, Jack?"

"No; I thought he was with you."

"Left behind, by Jove!" exclaimed Harvey.

"Serve him right if I left him behind entirely," said Harkaway, senior, rather angrily.

He was on the point of sending one of the porters back to the hotel, when Mr. Mole appeared.

Now there were two things that had delayed him.

One was that on the very morning Mr. Mole had mounted a new pair of artificial legs made by the very best surgical instrument maker in Marseilles.

Some time had been taken over the proper adjustment of these.

For the second reason—Mr. Mole had discovered that the hotel cellars contained some excellent brandy, and he had been taking a parting glass with the Irish diver before commencing his journey.

And as he now made his appearance on the railway platform, he was everything but steady on his new legs.

"Better late than never, Mr. Mole," said Harvey.

"I am not late."

"Yes, sir. Two minutes more and the train will be here."

An engine was in fact at that moment shunting some carriages which were to be attached to the train.

Mr. Mole turned on hearing the noise of the approaching locomotive.

But being, as aforesaid, slightly unsteady on his legs, he fell.

Fell right across the tracks.

"Oh, help!" he cried.

But before any one could stir, the engine was upon him.

The porters shouted, the ladies screamed with fright.

"Oh, Heaven, is it not horrible?" exclaimed a Frenchman. "Did you not hear the bones crash as the wheels went over his legs?"

"Over his legs," shouted Harvey. "Ha—ha! if that is all, it does not matter much."

The engine stopped, and Mole was rescued from his perilous position.

He had fainted, but a glass of water restored him.

"Are you hurt, old man?" asked Dick.

"No, I think not. It's only my legs, nothing else."

"Great Heaven, what a narrow escape!"

"So it is; but here is a nuisance; both my legs cut clean off, six inches above the ankle."

"Here, porter, put this gentleman in a first-class carriage," said Harkaway, senior.

"But, monsieur, he must be taken to the hospital; the surgeon is close at hand."

"Doctor be hanged! This gentleman must go to Paris by the next train."

The porters, being evidently unwilling to touch Mr. Mole, Harkaway said:

"Here, lend a hand, old man."

"All right," responded Harvey.

The pair of them immediately hoisted Mr. Mole into the carriage, the others took their seats, the engineer blew his whistle, and off they went.

To complete the horror of the spectators, who admired Mole's fortitude, and loathed the apparent barbarity of his friends, as the train was moving off, Harvey was plainly seen to cut off the old gentleman's shattered limbs, and pitch them into some empty goods wagons that were going in another direction.

"What horrid barbarians!" was the general exclamation of the bewildered spectators of the strange scene.

"A pretty object you have made of me, certainly," grumbled Mole, looking down at his curtailed legs.

"Your own fault, Mr. Mole," responded Harvey.

"Lucky it was not your head, Mr. Mole," said young Jack.

"You are all against me, I see, but it does not matter."

So saying, Mole took out his pocket flask and was about to refresh himself.

But Harkaway, senior, stretching out his hand, took the flask.

"No, Mr. Mole; if you have any more, I fear we shall have a more serious accident. So not a drop till the first time we stop."

"Why, this is a mail train, and only stops about every two hours."

"And I am quite sure you can exist without brandy for that little time."

"Well, I suppose I may smoke then?"

"Certainly, you shall have one of my best regalias."

Mr. Mole took the weed, and pulled away rather sulkily.

They had got about eight miles from Marseilles, when suddenly the engine slackened speed, and the train drew up at a little road-side station.

"What does this mean?" said Harvey. "We ought not to stop here."

"This is our first stopping place, however, so I'll trouble you for that flask, according to promise," said Mole, with a beaming countenance.

Harkaway handed it over, and was settling back again, when he heard a police official asking:

"Where is the gentleman who was run over at Marseilles?"

"Here," said Harkaway.

The gendarme ran to the spot, and to his intense surprise saw the victim of the accident in the act of taking a hearty drink from his brandy flask while his left hand held a lighted segar.

"The officials at Marseilles, unable to stop the train, telegraphed to me to see that you had proper attendance."

"Ha—ha—ha! look here, old boy; I always carry my own physic. Taste it."

The officer took the flask, and finding that the smell was familiar, applied it to his lips.

"The fact is," said Harkaway, "the gentleman was wearing wooden legs, and they only were damaged."

"Indeed; then you think that you are able to proceed on your journey, sir?"

"Yes, if you will leave me some of my medicine."

The gendarme bowed, handed back the flask, and the train rolled away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DUEL.

"PARIS at last!" exclaimed Harvey.

"That's a good job, for I am tired of sitting, and want to stretch my legs; don't you, Mr. Mole?" said young Jack.

"Don't be ridiculous, Jack," replied Mr. Mole. Harkaway senior, who had been looking out of the window, drew in his head and said:

"Well, Mr. Mole, you are in a nice fix."

"How?"

"I don't see any—"

"Any what?"

"Any cabs."

"The —"

"Don't swear."

"My dear Mr. Harkaway, now if you were without legs, would you not swear?"

"Can't say, having the proper number of pins."

"You'll have to walk," said Harvey. "There's not a cab in the station."

"But how can I walk?"

"Don't you remember the hero in the ballad of Chevy Chase?"

"Who was he?"

"The song says Witherington, but we will call him Mole."

"For Mole, indeed my heart is woe,
As one in doleful dumps;
For when his feet were cut away,
He walked upon his stumps."

By this time the train had stopped, and all the party got out except Mole.

As Harkaway had said, there was no vehicle in the station nor outside of it, so Mr. Mole was obliged to remain till his friends could hit upon some plan for removing him.

A porter was the first to make a suggestion.

"An artificial limb maker living opposite, monsieur," said he.

"Ah!"

"If I carried monsieur over, he might have some—ah—substitutes fitted on."

"A capital idea!" exclaimed Harvey; "over with him."

And before Mole could remonstrate, he was hoisted to the porter's shoulders, and trotted across the street.

Great was the joy of the Parisian *gamins* at having such a sight provided for their amusement.

Mole, however, bravely bore the chaff, half of which he did not understand.

The maker of artificial limbs soon fitted poor Mole with a pair of legs.

But alas!

No sooner had he stood upon them than his friends burst out in a loud laugh.

"What is the matter with you?" demanded Mr. Mole, who felt inclined to stand on his dignity as well as on his new legs.

"Ha—ha—ha!"

"I wonder you don't remember what Goldsmith says," continued Mole.

"What did he say, Mr. Mole?"

"Con't you remember that line about 'the loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind.' I fear your mind must be very vacant, Mr. Harvey."

"He had you there, Uncle Dick," said young Jack.

"Pooh! But look at his legs."

"Ha—ha—ha!" laughed young Jack, in turn.

Mr. Mole's trousers, it will be recollected, had been cut away below the knees immediately after his railway accident, and now he stood in a pair of nicely-varnished boots, above which could be seen the various springs and hinges of his mechanical limbs.

The trouser legs were not longer in proportion than a small boy's knickerbockers.

By this time, however, a cab or two had turned up, and, the ladies having been fetched from the railway waiting-room, the whole party proceeded to one of the many good hotels Paris possesses.

* * * * *

The third evening after their arrival, young Jack and Harry Girdwood strolled out together.

They no doubt would have enjoyed the company of the two girls, but little Emily and Paquita had been roving about the town all day long, and were too tired to go out that evening.

"What is this place, Jack?" asked Harry, as they both paused in front of a narrow, but brilliantly-lighted doorway.

"A shooting gallery, I fancy."

"Shall we go in?"

"Certainly; but I don't fancy the French are very great 'shootists,' as the Yankees say."

"All the more fun, perhaps."

And without more talk, the youngsters walked in.

It was a long room, divided by slight partitions into four different galleries, and at the end of each of these was a target in the shape of a doll.

After watching others for a time, Harry took half-a-dozen shots at one of the figures, which he struck four times.

Young Jack then tried, and was equally successful.

"Good shooting, young gentlemen," said one of the spectators, an Englishman; "but if you want to see real pistol practice, look at this Frenchman."

And he pointed to a tall, dark man who was just preparing to fire.

The target he had before him was not a little doll like the others, but a lay figure dressed in black, closely buttoned up, and holding in its hand an empty pistol pointed towards the live shooter.

"He is a noted duellist," said the Englishman, "and has killed more than one adversary."

Jack and Harry looked at him with considerable curiosity, with which was mixed a tinge of loathing.

The duellist had brought his own pistols, one of which he carefully loaded, and having placed himself in position, rapidly aimed and fired.

Instantly the lay figure showed a spot of white on its black coat, which, after all, was only made of a kind of paste or varnish, which chipped off when struck by the bullet.

"Straight to the heart," said the Englishman.

"That's good shooting," exclaimed Harry Girdwood.

The Frenchman fired again, making an equally good shot.

When he had fired ten, young Jack for the first time broke silence.

"I don't believe he could do that in the field with a live adversary and a loaded pistol opposite him."

The Frenchman again pulled the trigger, but the eleventh shot flew wide of the mark.

Almost foaming with passion at having missed his aim, he dashed the weapon to the ground.

"I must request the gentleman who spoke to stand the test."

"With great pleasure," responded Jack, coolly.

The Frenchman stared at the speaker.

"Bah! I don't fight with boys."

"Then I shall proclaim to all Paris that you are a cur, and try to back out of a quarrel when your challenge is accepted."

"Very well, then, you shall die in the morning. Henri"—this to a friend—"arrange with the English boy's second, if he has one; if he has not, find him one."

The Englishman, who had previously spoken, at once stepped forward and offered his services.

"Although," said he, "I should much prefer to see this affair settled peacefully."

"I am entirely in your hands, sir," responded Jack.

And he retired to the other side of the room.

"Jack—Jack! what demon possessed you to get into such a mess?"

"No demon, Harry, but some of my father's hot blood. He was always very prompt to accept a challenge."

"He will not let you fight."

"He will not know till it is settled. Listen to me, Harry; if you tell him or anyone else, or try to stop the plan that my second may propose, I swear I'll never speak to you again."

"But you stand every chance of being killed."

"Harry, we have both of us faced death many times, and I am sure I am not going to turn my back on a Frenchman."

Poor Harry could say nothing more.

The Englishman rejoined them.

"I can't get that fellow to accept an apology."

"That's right," interposed Jack.

His second looked surprised at the youth's coolness, and continued:

"So I must parade you in the Bois de Boulogne at sunrise. It's about an hour's drive."

"Where shall we meet you?"

The second hesitated, and then named a time and place.

"Now," said Jack, "I will go and have a little sleep; not at home, but somewhere in this neighborhood."

They went to a respectable hotel close by, and Jack, having made a few simple arrangements (including a message to Emily,) in case of being killed, laid himself on his bed, and was soon slumbering peacefully.

About a quarter of an hour after the sun had risen, they were all upon the ground.

Jack and Harry with their second, and the Frenchman with his.

There was also a surgeon present.

Little time was lost.

The pistols were loaded, according to previous arrangement between the two seconds, with a lighter charge than usual, so that Jack might possibly escape with only a flesh wound instead of having a hole drilled right through him.

The combatants were then placed half facing each other, fifteen paces apart.

"There is a grave suspicion afloat that your adversary has an ugly knack of pulling the trigger half a second too soon," whispered Jack's second, "so I am going to give him a caution."

A pistol was placed in the hand of each, and then Jack's second spoke.

"Listen, gentlemen. You will fire when I give the word three. If either pulls the trigger before that word is pronounced, it will be murder."

He looked at the Frenchman, and then counted:

"One, two, three."

But before the word "three" had fully passed his lips, the Frenchman's pistol was discharged.

Young Jack, however, prepared for such a trick, had just a moment before turned full towards him and stared him in the face.

This maneuver was entirely successful.

The Frenchman's unfair, murderous aim was disconcerted, and his bullet whistled harmlessly past our hero's ear.

Jack then deliberately leveled his pistol at the Frenchman, who trembled violently, and showed every symptom of the most abject terror.

"I thought so," exclaimed Jack. "A vile coward as well as a murderer."

And he discharged his own pistol in the air.

"Why did you not shoot the villain?" exclaimed Harry Girdwood, the surgeon, and Jack's second simultaneously.

"It would be doing him too much honor, gentlemen. I leave him to the hangman."

"You should have killed him," growled the surgeon, glancing after the discomfited duelist, who was sneaking off, unattended even by his own second.

"I don't feel bloodthirsty just at present, and I have proved the words that gave rise to the challenge."

"That is true, but some other poor devil may not be so lucky."

"I fancy after this morning's *expose* anyone may refuse to go out with him without fear of dishonor."

"True; that is one good thing."

They re-entered their carriage and returned to Paris.

Just as young Jack alighted from the vehicle, he found himself seized by the collar and shaken violently.

He turned hastily.

"Dad!"

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Harkaway senior, "where have you been all night?"

"Why—I—arranged to go out early in the morning for a drive with this gentleman and Harry, so I took a room here at this hotel so as to be close to the rendezvous."

"That is the truth, but not all the truth." Sir, may I ask you the object of your very early excursion with my son?"

"Well, sir, the fact is, this young gentleman became involved last night in a little dispute which necessitated an exchange of pistol shots, and your son, I must say, behaved in a most gallant manner."

"Not touched, Jack?"

"No, dad."

"Did you shoot t'other fellow?"

"No, father; I only shoot game—human or brute. I leave gamekeepers and hangmen to exterminate vermin."

"Well, now, cut along home. Your mother is in no end of a funk about you."

So Jack went home, and, having explained the reason of his absence, was soon forgiven by all, except little Emily, who boxed his ears, declaring it was evident he did not care about her, or he would not have risked his life in such a manner.

Then she refused, for a whole hour, to speak to him; at the expiration of which time she kissed him, and asked his pardon for having shown such bad temper.

"All right, Em. You're a brick."

"Don't talk slang, sir."

That same evening they left Paris, and at an early hour the next morning were in London.

CHAPTER XIX.

"LAST SCENE OF ALL, THAT ENDS THIS STRANGE, EVENTFUL HISTORY."

"JACK."

"Yes, father."

"What do you think you are going to be? I mean what business or profession?"

This conversation took place about a week after their return to England.

"Would you like to be a doctor or a lawyer, or become a great financier in the city?" continued Harkaway senior.

"Neither of those, thank you. I have been too much used to plenty of fresh air and exercise to settle down to an indoor occupation; the sea is my choice."

"It is not your mother's choice, so you may just give up that notion at once and forever."

"Well, next to that I should like to have a nice, compact farm of about six hundred acres in a part of the country where there is good shooting, hunting and fishing."

"Ah, that's better."

"Then we'll consider that settled, dad."

"Yes; but you must finish your education first; that has been much neglected."

So the result was that both young Jack and Harry Girdwood were sent to reside for a year with a clergyman, who was also a farmer, and who undertook, while improving their general education, to give them a practical knowledge of agriculture.

The year passed away, and the two young men returned home for a brief holiday before settling down, for Harry was also to be a farmer, Dick Harvey having undertaken to put him into a farm.

They were sitting at breakfast one morning when two letters were brought, both with foreign postmarks.

Harkaway senior opened them.

"This concerns you, my dear," said he to Paquita.

"How so?" asked the girl.

"It is from your father. And you must prepare to hear bad news."

"He is dead—he is dead!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears.

When some time had passed, she was calmed sufficiently to hear the letter read.

It was a deathbed letter, in which the writer stated that remembering the noble-hearted Englishman, Harkaway, he appointed him sole trustee of his wealth, to be given as a marriage portion to Paquita.

Documents were enclosed to put Harkaway in possession of the writer's riches, and he concluded by praying Heaven to bless his daughter.

A postscript was added in a different hand.

"The writer of this died on the 4th of April last, the day after he signed this letter and the enclosed documents which are witnessed by me. 'ANTONIO DELAVAT, Surgeon.'"

Paquita's grief at the death of her father was great, but in little Emily and Mrs. Harkaway she found two comforters, who did their best to assuage her sorrows.

But the other letter.

"Why, this is from our old Australian friend, Rook!" exclaimed Harkaway.

"Rook!"

"Yes. And this is what Rook has to say for himself:

"If ever a man had reason to be grateful to another, surely I have cause to bless the day I met you. For thanks to you, I am no longer an outcast, but have atoned for the past—ay, and refunded with interest that sum of money which was the cause of my being out here. Through your kindness I was enabled to go into business as a farmer, and I have prospered so that I am now one of the richest men in this part of Australia; but I owe all my prosperity to you, so I will not boast of it. Being better educated than many of the settlers, I have been appointed magistrate for the district; but whenever I can be lenient without being unjust, I humble myself, remember what I once was, and try to give the culprit another chance. Heaven has greatly prospered me, and I pray that Heaven's blessings may rest on you and yours."

"Bravo, Rook!" said Harvey and Harry Girdwood.

"What are you thinking about, Jack?" asked Harry, a day or two after.

"About old Mole."

"What about him?"

"Why, we haven't had a good lark with him since we left Marseilles."

"True."

"The old man will get rusty if we don't wake him up a little."

"Well, what is your idea?"

"Haven't any at present; but something will turn up."

And something did turn up that very day.

Now it should be known that Mole, although he passed the greater time with his old friends, had taken a small cottage close by, so that he might not entirely wear out their hospitality.

He generally slept there, but spent his days with the Harkaways.

Jack and Harry called upon the old man, and were admitted to his presence, as he was putting the finishing touches to his toilet.

This consisted in anointing his bald head with some wonderful fluid, warranted to produce a luxuriant growth of hair.

This gave the youths an idea, and having invited him to dinner, they departed to carry out their joke.

All passed off pleasantly during the evening, but Jack and Harry were absent about an hour. During that time they procured access to Mole's premises, and having emptied his bottle of hair restorer, filled the vial with liquid glue, after which they returned to the house.

"I must go early," said Mr. Mole, rising. "I have to attend court as a jurymen in the morning."

"Then you won't be able to dress your hair properly," said Jack.

"Oh, yes; I shall put on a good dose before I leave home, that will last till evening," replied Mole.

He went home, but overslept himself, and had to dress in a hurry.

Mole had got to the door, when he remembered the hair restorer, and going back, applied a plentiful dose with a sponge.

He reached the court very hot.

By that time the glue had set, and he found he could not remove his hat.

"Isaac Mole!" shouted the official who was calling the jury.

"Here!" replied Mole, as he rushed to the box. A murmur of astonishment was heard.

"Hats off in court!" shouted the usher.

"Really, I—"

"Every one must be uncovered in court."

"But, I assure you, I can't—"

"Are you a Quaker?" demanded the judge.

"No; but I wish to explain that I kept my hat on because—"

"I cannot listen to any excuse except the one I mentioned. Take off your hat instantly."

"But I say I kept it on because—"

"This is intolerable. Do you mean to insult the court? Take your hat off instantly, or I will fine you for contempt."

"Well, I must say it's hard, I can't say a word."

"You are fined five pounds, and if you don't remove your hat—"

"I want to explain."

"Officer, remove that man's hat."

The tipstaff approached Mole and hit the offending hat with his stick, but it did not move.

Then he struck it harder, and the crown went in.

"This is too bad!" screamed Mole.

But the tipstaff was wroth, and picking up a large law book, smashed it flat.

This was too much for Mole.

"You mutton-headed idiot, if you and the judge had a particle of sense, you would know that I did not remove my hat, because I couldn't. It is glued on."

Mole, however, was led away in custody, and a fresh jurymen sworn.

But Jack and Harry, who had been highly-amused spectators, thought the joke had gone far enough, so they tipped a solicitor through whom an explanation was made, and Mole was released.

He also got off serving on the jury.

They left the court together.

But another surprise was in store for them.

"How are you, gentlemen?" said a very fami-

liar voice, and, lo! Figgins the orphan stood before them.

Figgins had not remained in Marseilles like the others, and, therefore, had escaped being arrested for counterfeit coining.

He reached London in safety, and having taken the upper part of a house within half a mile of St. Paul's Cathedral, resolved never more to trust himself beyond the city boundaries.

Yet, in his retirement, his conscience pricked him for having left so hurriedly the friends who had rescued him from many a danger.

And Mole, too, his own particular traveling companion.

"I must go and see him once more," thought the orphan.

So one fine day he plucked up courage to venture a short journey on an English railway, and knowing where the elder Harkaway lived, was speedily instructed how to find Mole.

So now behold him shaking hands all around.

"I thought I must see you once more," said he, "but it is a great undertaking, you know, for my travels made me more timid than ever I was."

"Timid?" ejaculated Mole; "why, on one or two occasions you displayed bravery almost equal to my own."

"Mildly, Mr. Mole," said Jack.

"Ah, Mr. Harkaway, you three gentlemen are brave men, but I am only a poor timid orphan."

"That need not make you timid."

"But it does. So I have resolved never to trust myself out of London again."

"Then I am afraid we shall not meet very often, Mr. Figgins," said Mole, "for I, you know, hate town life."

"If you do come to town, though, you will call?"

"Certainly."

"Then, gentlemen, I will wish you farewell. I am deeply grateful for all you did when we were abroad—"

"Don't mention it."

"Mr. Mole, farewell. You know I feel more like an orphan than ever now I am parting from you."

"Don't talk like that, Figgins," said Mole.

"I can't help it, indeed, I can't. Farewell, my dear friend, farewell!"

And Figgins retired to his city home, where he still lives, though he is getting very feeble.

Still, he brightens up whenever he speaks of his old friend and traveling companion, Mole.

* * * * *

It is hard to part with old friends, but the decrees of fate cannot be avoided, so we must conclude our story.

It will be hardly necessary, we fancy, to inform our readers that young Jack eventually married little Emily, and Harry Girdwood led Paquita to the altar.

And as weddings are very much alike, we will not describe the ceremony, but content ourselves with saying that as much happiness as this world can afford, was and is theirs.

[THE END.]

Jack and Harry have extensive farms near each other, and are wealthy country gentlemen.

They are fond of outdoor sports, and have recently established a pack of harriers, Tinker and Bogey being respectively first and second whips. In each establishment there was formerly a room kept always ready for Mr. Mole, who went from one to the other as it pleased him, sure of a hearty welcome always.

But, alas! poor Mole is now no more.

Age preyed on his shaken body, and at length laid him on his deathbed.

Even then he could not help referring to the matrimonial portion of his life.

"I have been too much married, Jack. I am 'a victim to connubiality,' if I may be allowed to quote Sam Weller; but never again, dear boy."

And when only half conscious, he would repeat:

"Never again, dear boy," expressing his firm determination not to marry again.

Poor Mole!

After all, he ended his days in peace, and died regretted by all his friends, who, if they had laughed at his failings, also remembered his kindly disposition.

He left behind him sufficient of this world's goods to enable his faithful Chloe to give the twins a good education.

They are now rollicking schoolboys, but will have a fair start when their guardians, Jack and Harry, fancy they are fitted to begin their battle with life.

* * * * *

Old Jack—he is getting old now—lives with Emily not far from his son, and with them, of course, is Dick Harvey.

Often on a fine day old Jack will lead his grandchildren to the village churchyard, and while the youngsters deck poor old Mole's grave with flowers, will relate to them the best incidents of the old man's life.

Not far from poor Mole's grave is another tomb, in which rest the earthly remains of Monday, Prince of Limbi, who had grown grey in the service of Mr. Harkaway.

A much severer winter than usual laid the seeds of a complaint which speedily carried him off.

Sunday, whose head is fast becoming white as snow, took his death much to heart, and even now frequently strolls into the quiet churchyard to indulge in pensive recollections of his old friend by the side of his grave—ay, and perchance to reflect on his own end, which he knows full well must be fast approaching.

Monday had been thrifty, and when the days of mourning were over, his widow retired to Oxford to pass the remainder of her days with many good presents from Jack Harkaway, given in remembrance of his faithful servant, Monday, the Prince of Limbi.

* * * * *

Readers, our tale is told; and we leave Harkaway to the repose he has so well earned.

But if you would prosper as he has done, be like him, truthful, brave, and generous.

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